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THE
LAWS OF THOUGHT.

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"THE LAWS OF THOUGHT."

From "The Spectator," 11th March, 1865.

"THE Scottish nation has for a long time past been prolific in metaphysical speculation, and it is remarkable how diverse are the lines of thought struck out. The land which produced such unsparing analysts as Hume and Brown now seems to bear writers who take the very opposite paths. The above work is distinguished by the complete adoption of the deductive method. Starting from primary notions of God, and of Infinite perfection, the writer undertakes to deduce therefrom the laws of truth objective, and of truth subjective. And if he is distant from Hume in method, he is still further distant from Paley in his conclusions, and from all those schools of moral philosophy which proceed, in Mr. Robertson's opinion, 'as if there were no God and no universal standard of right and wrong.' Still, he writes with a liberal and catholic spirit, which we cannot too much praise, deploring, 'that unamiability of disposition has often been the characteristic of many professors of Christianity.' The language of the work possesses remarkable clearness, and no inconsiderable grace; and it discloses an intimate acquaintance with Ciceronian and other sources of ancient and modern philosophy not often studied now-a-days."



THE
LAWS OF THOUGHT:

A NEW THEORY OF MENTAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY.

BY
ALEXANDER ROBERTSON.

"Thy Law is the Truth."—PSALM cxix.

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P R E F A C E.

It is perhaps due to some of my correspondents to say, that they have all along differed with me regarding the title of my humble contribution to the science of Metaphysics. But, looking at the meaning of the terms, and the object of my work, I could not yet select a designation that would better answer my purpose. What I attempt, is the demonstration of that Eternal and Supreme Law to which all phenomena of the mind are necessarily referable; and which law, (existing, as it does, independently of our perceptions), is truth objectively considered; and its promulgation on the mind becomes truth in its subjective form or relationship.

The formula laid down in my lecture for the distinguishing of Theistic from Atheistic Philosophy may yet be found important, as it will enable young Metaphysicians to know, at first sight, those theories that are in accordance with, or antagonistic to, Truth. The common idea of an Atheist is one that denies the BEING of a God, or of a great first cause; but as an Atheist of this kind is, philosophically speaking, a non-entity, his position is therefore unworthy of very serious regard. It is the philosophy based upon this virtual denial of God's existence, that has caused so much harm in the world, and is doubtless still retarding the upward and onward progress of mankind.

If the distinction I have drawn be proved to be a real one, many will, I have no doubt, feel annoyed at seeing their favourite systems of philosophy placed in the atheistic category. This remark is applicable to some of the supporters of a great modern scheme for the social amelioration of mankind; who, because they advance as the object of their efforts an improvement in the condition of man, may suppose they are entitled, on that ground, to pursue their course unchallenged. No purity of object, can, however, justify the adoption of doubtful means for securing an end in itself desirable. I have endeavoured (Book iv., § 1 to 5,) to trace Social Science to its only *possible foundations*; and unless the structures of our social philosophers be laid upon them, their efforts cannot fail to be inimical to the best interests of mankind. Without a knowledge of metaphysics, men may go blundering on in the dark, labouring with might and main to overthrow that very edifice which they intended to support and extend. "Many a philosopher," says Ferrier, "lends unintentional support to the very doctrine he so strenuously denounces, and unintentional opposition to the very doctrine he so strenuously recommends." Dr. Reid holds, that all knowledge got by reasoning must be built on first principles; and that this is as certain as that every house must have a foundation. In our day, however, it is held not only possible, but quite practicable, to rear up lofty structures of knowledge without foundations; and it is now found very easy to arrive at satisfactory scientific conclusions without being troubled concerning any of the preliminary processes of ratiocination. Philosophy may be, in one view, correctly designated as the connection or agreement of ideas. Many

men will at once give their assent to the proposition, that God's will or law must be the unalterable rule of all duty, individual or political; but they fail in carrying out the chain of reasoning to its legitimate conclusions in the everyday affairs of life. This is particularly true in reference to the position of the Social Science Association; for many truly benevolent individuals cannot see how its operations can be in any way influenced by their being in accordance with, or in antagonism to, religion or the law of nature. "The prejudice," says Dugald Stewart, "which is commonly entertained against metaphysical speculations, seems to arise from two causes—first, from an apprehension that the subjects about which they are employed are placed beyond the reach of human faculties; and, secondly, *from a belief that these subjects have no relation to the business of life.*" These observations are as applicable at the present day as when they were made, upwards of seventy years ago.

There are some who entertain the ridiculous notion, that because the Association to which I have alluded, has a large and influential membership, its principles are, on that account, not within the reach of philosophic examination. Absurd idea! as if weighty names could have anything whatever to do with the working out of a purely scientific problem; or as if they could shield peculiar doctrines from the force of syllogistic reasoning.

There are some with whom I have met who question the soundness of the affirmation in my middle term;* but if ever I had a doubt as to this, a very satisfactory correspondence with one of the Society's most distinguished members in Scotland,

* See Appendix, p. 13.

and who is, moreover, one of the leaders in our national church, could not fail to have removed it. The result of the discussion with my estimable friend, Sheriff Barclay, was duly intimated to the President and Secretary of the Society ; and has, therefore, been homologated by their silence as the authorized principle of the Institution.

Some there are who, from personal considerations, would still support the Association, admitting it to be atheistic :—others might for a time do so in ignorance, not knowing that its principles could have no other tendency than to corrupt and destroy mankind.

Although no amount of authority can have any effect in the settlement of a metaphysical question, yet it is gratifying to me to reflect, that my position is, beyond all contradiction, HISTORICALLY secure ; for, there is not one author I can recollect of, who is recognized as an authority in the philosophical world, who has not treated Social Science as a subdivision of Mental Philosophy ;—always saving and excepting those who either professed themselves to be, or have been usually regarded as, decidedly atheistical in their doctrines. If, as Stewart calls them, *the liberal and manly pursuits of political philosophy* were studied in the manner they ought to be, and doubtless ere long will be,—if the undeniable principles of abstract truth were faithfully applied to our literature and institutions, instead of being trusted to mere caprice and hap-hazard, then, but not till then, might we reasonably expect to see, in the words of the elegant writer and profound philosopher I have just named, “ more perfect and happy forms of society than have yet been realized in the history of mankind.”

DUN-DONNOCHY, July, 1865.

T H E

L A W S O F T H O U G H T.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

I. Although there was probably no period in the world's history when at least some attention was not paid to the truths of Philosophy, yet it was only about two thousand five hundred years ago that the Science of Mind began to be cultivated as a separate branch of human knowledge. Since that time, however, it has received more or less attention in every country, and among every people claiming even a moderate degree of civilisation. Still, if there has been a time in the world's life when mental science was neglected, there is certainly no reason for apprehending that such ignorance will again darken the human mind; because, if Philosophy do not lead and guide mankind in their onward and upward progress, it will at least keep pace with their advances, however rapidly they may be made. One may well think

it absolutely impossible to conceive of a period when mankind will be so elevated and purified that the study of philosophy can be laid aside as unnecessary. On the contrary, the probabilities are, that as humanity progresses in true civilisation; so will philosophy be held in greater estimation, and also that many of the pursuits and gratifications which are now so eagerly followed, and absorb so much attention, will assume their true colours, and, in comparison with its lofty and pure enjoyments, appear evanescent and worthless.

II. It is not difficult to account for the disregard which has been paid to Mental Philosophy for a considerable time. The Inductive method of BACON, which applied to physics, has wrought such wonders, that the more valuable portion has been comparatively thrown into the shade.

In ancient times, every crude notion that entered the brain of a poet, recluse, or statesman, was dignified with the name of Philosophy, and the Deductive method, as applied to physics, did so little for the advancement of knowledge, that it came to be cast aside as comparatively useless. It may, however, be doubted whether Induction, so useful in discovering the materialistic laws of nature, is equally serviceable

in developing or applying the laws by which *moral* truth is regulated. Admitting all that can be claimed on behalf of Induction for advancing one branch of science, it may be possible that, in regard to the higher branch, viz., that which concerns man's moral existence, it may have had a bad effect in superseding the other method of enquiry—the Deductive.

III. Philosophy, which literally means the love of wisdom, has been held to include, among other subjects of investigation, the science or method by which man can ascertain the first principles of moral truth. A treatise on the whole subject would necessarily be very comprehensive; but the present essay will be devoted to a particular section, or department of enquiry, rather than to a discussion of the whole science. That there is in the minds of all men a notion or conception of some difference between right and wrong, will scarcely be controverted, although many affirm that such difference can only be found in the *â posteriori*, or the *results* of certain actions, rather than in the thing itself. There is, therefore, *some truth* to be found in the breast of man, either to a greater or less extent; and it is to ascertain in what this difference between right and wrong consists,—whether in the thing itself, *â priori*, or whether in the con-

ceptions of it, or both put together, that the following pages will be devoted. If it be admitted that there is an inherent, eternal, and immutable difference in nature between virtue and vice, then the question immediately suggests itself, What makes right to be right, and wrong to be wrong? Further, admitting that men have certain conceptions or ideas regarding these two terms, where is the *standard* by which they fall to be tested, and their accuracy ascertained? In other words, is it possible to narrow the enquiry into a few primary and essential truths, or axioms, which will guide the mind aright in its search after knowledge, and form a touchstone by which all subsidiary notions may be corrected; or, to supply a few guiding points by which the helmsman can safely steer in his path through the ocean of life?

IV. The distinct object to be here kept in view is practically the answering of these questions,—to show, if possible, wherein man's chief good is to be found,—to unfold those conditions which are indispensable to a successful life; or rather the duty required of man in order to secure the highest, and indeed only real ends of his existence. It may be that, circumstanced as man is at present, he cannot yield perfect obedience to the

laws by which he is governed ; but, admitting all this, it does not follow therefrom that he is removed from the sphere of their operation, or that he is at liberty to cast them aside altogether. Although man may not now be able to enjoy a state of pure happiness, that can form no sufficient reason why he should deviate further from the right way, and thus render himself more and more miserable.

V. That there is some rule for human guidance, or, in other words, some law or laws in existence by which man is governed, is in the highest degree likely, judging from the analogy afforded by external nature. We see that the heavenly bodies are kept revolving in their several spheres by a fixed law. We find the same law operating in the suspension of a drop of dew on a summer evening. Even a flake of snow is not formed without the operation of its laws. So, then, it is reasonable to conclude that the most noble and the most valuable production to be found in this world—the human soul itself—is not left to chance, nor cast adrift on the wide ocean, like a derelict ship. There is thus a strong *prima facie* case made out for an investigation into the law or laws of intellect, though whether we can discover them rightly is another question.

VI. The knowledge of such a law, or the conditions of human spiritual life, would constitute TRUTH. The practical obedience to these conditions is VIRTUE. The unfailing result or product of such obedience would be perfect happiness, while, on the other hand, the breach of these intellectual laws must be supreme misery.

VII. It has been often urged that the search after truth is a dry and uninviting avocation. Even admitting that to be the case, and supposing the subject to be difficult and irksome, it surely is a work of primary importance to pursue an enquiry with which our individual happiness is so closely concerned, as well as that of the whole human race. If the path be steep and rugged, there is a prize held out of sufficient worth to rouse to action even the most indifferent and careless ; for we have the concurrent testimony of some of the wisest of men, that any discovery of this kind of truth would be of greater benefit to humanity than all the achievements of physical science put together ! Happiness may be said to consist in serenity of mind ; and if so, mere physical science—any thing it does being indirect—cannot reach far in contributing to this end.

VIII. At this time of day, any fresh discovery

of moral truth could hardly be looked for, as the subject, independently of what is to be found in Scripture, has exercised the faculties of many of the most gifted men during their life-time. But although no new phase of truth can be found out, yet a great deal of good may be attained by placing the truth in a proper light, or, at least, by causing its rays to be directed to some dark spot hitherto partially neglected. There is not perhaps one idea that could be broached in the wide subject of philosophy that has not been advanced somewhere before ; what is necessary, therefore, is only to render available the materials at hand, and endeavour to construct out of them one substantial edifice, correct in its outward proportions, and exact in its details. There are many who affirm that this structure is already complete, so far as the whole duty of individual man is concerned ; but there are few who would contend that the relationship in which man stands to his fellow man is sufficiently clear ; or, in other words, that Political Philosophy is now entitled to claim a place among the exact sciences, and that its rules are now complete,—to which nothing can be added. Those who might be inclined to indulge in such innocent dreams, have only to turn their attention to re-

cent occurrences in America, when their eyes will be opened to the fact, that a great deal has yet to be done ere it can be said that a further search after truth is unnecessary. Had any true knowledge of the duties which regulate man's intercourse with man existed, what havoc to humanity would there have been spared !

IX. While the study of the "intellectual system of the universe" is one which doubtless engages the rapt attention of higher intelligences than mankind ; and while the ordinary limits of individual life are too short for its proper investigation, yet the field is one that never mis-crops, and any seed or labour, however small, expended upon it cannot fail in the nature of things to yield a profitable return. One of the wisest of men has emphatically stated, that fine writing and great learning are obstacles to its right elucidation, rather than indispensable requisites. The philosopher alluded to counsels enquirers to hold by one or two authors, and to take possession of their minds and thoughts, rather than to wander at large over the unbounded field of authorship. The sincere enquirer after truth will not be so solicitous about the garments in which Philosophia is clothed, provided only he gets possession of herself ; nor will he reject any well-

meant endeavour to this end, although not served up in the form of a fashionable novel for the drawing-room table, and where the pure medicine is administered in homœopathic doses. That people have no time for such investigations in our day, or in what a literary celebrity calls the "tumultuous hurry of the nineteenth century," is the more to be deplored. Life, especially in the larger towns, is now reduced to a gallopade; men are hurried forward with such a velocity that they have no leisure for ascertaining whence they have come, and whither their course is tending, or for what purpose their life has been designed. Religion, too, is almost invariably taken at second hand, as few think of going to the great fountain-head of truth to draw for themselves.

X. From the hints already thrown out as to the nature of the present undertaking, it will be seen that it is one with which—in its main purpose, at least—mere opinion has little to do,—as little, indeed, as it has with a mathematical problem. To some it may appear harsh or cruel for a mighty being like the Creator to take notice of every divergence from his law. As to this it is only necessary to enquire what is the actual fact. Is this the true state of the case, or is it not? There can be no half-way in

any theory of the description alluded to ; for if not perfectly true, it must be erroneous ; and by this criterion it must stand or fall. This may be a severe ordeal to pass through ; but it is the test imperatively demanded by the nature of the subject, and no hesitation should be used in its application.

XI. Viewing the two grand divisions of the subject before us, it may be remarked that authors have generally held by one method of investigation, viz. : truth viewed objectively, or externally ; thus neglecting the other department, the subjective, or the internal ; while others, again, have closely pursued truth as it is found in man, overlooking, to a great extent, the immutable standard of truth, which cannot be affected by any ideas that may be entertained regarding it. There are many who can give a sound enough definition of virtue, so far as they go ; but at the same time they signally fail in the application they make of it. Thus, they affirm that virtue consists in acting according to what is right ; or, to adopt another definition, in obeying the will of God ; but if they are pressed to say what *is* right, or what the will of God actually is, it will be seen at once that their definition is but a simple truism, and nothing more.

We are safe enough to admit that an action which is *right* cannot be *wrong*; but is the rightness or wrongness of the action to be discovered by a fundamental law of right, or by the immediate results of the action itself? Or, admitting that God's will must be the rule of duty to mankind, is this will objective or subjective—changeable or unchangeable? And if it is either one or other, how can it be applied to individual obligation, or to political science? Thus the definition given above, although correct so far as it goes, just leaves the matter in about as obscure a state as it was at first. Some farther steps are necessary before the truth can be made patent to the mind for its every-day life, or as a basework of Social Philosophy.

XII. It has been indicated already what the nature of the present enquiry is; still it may not be out of place to point out some things that are often mixed up with discussions of this nature, but which are intended to be avoided, or taken for granted here. Thus, instead of attempting to *prove the existence of God*, or to controvert the argument adverse thereto, the train of reasoning is proceeded with as if no controversy on the subject ever existed. It does not follow from this assumption that the question is by any means

unworthy of notice, but simply from the consideration that it is a totally different branch of the subject ; and two branches, distinct of themselves, would suffer from intermingling. Whether the endeavouring *to prove* the existence of God is, or has been beneficial to society, or calculated to advance the real interests of truth, is what has no immediate concern with a pure theory of Ethics, although the latter question may have an important influence on the Theistic controversy ; because, if it can be shewn that all human actions are under the regulation of a certain fixed law, or laws, the very fact of such law, or laws, must demonstrate the existence of a Law Giver. The idea of a law without a legislator involves in itself a positive absurdity. This treatise, then, is proceeded with on the assumption that the Great Being whom we all reverence under the titles God, Deity, the Almighty, the Supreme Creator, really exists, and is possessed of all the attributes usually ascribed to him. To such as deny or doubt his existence, the following pages can have little meaning, so they may proceed no further with this disquisition.

XII. In order to prove the existence of Deity it has been supposed necessary to prove both the existence of mind and matter. One philosopher

is said to have given up the world of matter as a compromise, on the understanding that he was to be allowed to retain the spiritual. Some have gone a step farther, and denied the existence of both mind and matter, affirming that nothing exists at all, save and except a few ideas floating through space. To explode such false and mischievous notions has been the chief aim of philosophy for generations; and as the work is not quite finished, there is yet employment for a large number of labourers in the same field. But as there is matter of even more importance before us, the consideration of Idealism and Materialism must be postponed until a more convenient season.

XIV. Although there are better reasons for mixing up Psychology with Ethics than the subjects above noticed, and although no investigation in the latter department can be conducted without some reference to the former, still it is to the mind *as a whole* that we have to look, rather than to the "many lesser faculties that serve reason as chief." As bodily health can doubtless be greatly improved by the exercise of all the different muscles and members, so it is essential for mental health and strength, to have all the faculties of the soul frequently called into healthy

action. Although the work of analyzing the different mental powers is a most important one, and calculated to quicken the mind in the perception of truth, yet such an employment has no *necessary relation* to the abstract theory of Truth, subjective or objective. It could form no excuse whatever for a given crime, were the prisoner in the dock to plead that he appropriated such and such an article on account of the predominance of the feeling of covetousness within him. The judge would justly overlook any such special reference to feelings, or the predominance of certain faculties, and would deal with the man simply as a whole. It does not follow from this, however, that no reference can be made to certain faculties of the mind, if need were, for the illustration of a given subject.

XV. 1. In point of antiquity, the controversy regarding what is frequently called *the insoluble problem of moral evil*, must be allowed the precedence of the systematic pursuit of ethical science; and in regard to the influence this subject exerts upon the progress of the human race for good or evil, it can scarcely be ranked as of secondary importance.

2. Although an enquiry into the existence and nature of the *summum bonum* ought, perhaps, to

include a full discussion of the question how evil exists in the government of God, at least so far as practical morality is concerned ; yet it does not appear to be necessarily connected with a purely theoretical search after truth ; and, for this simple and obvious reason, that the grand distinctions between right and wrong could not be affected in the slightest degree, either by the law being entirely kept ; or, on the other hand, by the rebellion of man ; or, indeed, by the open revolt of all intelligent creation. Further, the study of ethics is to be prosecuted, *not* in reference to man *as he may be found now*, ignorant, depraved, and corrupt ; but in regard to man *as he ought to be*, and as he came from the hands of his Maker.

3. It is therefore quite possible, nay even requisite, to ascertain what Moral Truth really is, before embarking into the wide field of optimistic speculation, or undertaking what some seem to think the forlorn hope of justifying God's moral government from the reflections that have been all along cast upon it. Nay, further, even admitting the reflection to be well-founded, and that God really brought evil into the world, this could not relieve mankind from their undoubted obligation to render a full and complete obedi-

ence to the divine commands. When a wicked and tyrannical ruler exceeds certain limits, his subjects are justified in throwing off his yoke; but although God's law (if that were possible) was felt as a heavy bondage, no created arm could ever hope to overturn his government. Supposing God to be a hard task-master, reaping where he has not sown, yet his commands would nevertheless require to be obtempered, and the most complete submission rendered to his authority. It is sufficient for us to know at this stage of the enquiry, that there is a LAW by which we are governed, and to that law we must yield perfect obedience, totally irrespective and entirely independent of any opinion we may afterwards form as to whether it is a good or a bad law.

4. It by no means follows from all this that the one question may not be connected with the other *subjectively*. Ignorance regarding the nature of God, and of his law, must, in the nature and constitution of things, be productive of error on every other subject; and conversely, clear light upon the attributes of God, may illuminate other subjects, however dark they may appear to be; and although moral evil may at present be difficult to reconcile with the goodness of God, it is

purely an assumption to affirm that the whole question is insoluble. It ought to require the very strongest possible proof to justify the assertion, that this vital question has been placed before man as an enigma beyond his faculties to understand or comprehend. If it can be shewn that God's eternal law is infinitely holy, and that its natural effect is to secure the complete blessedness of the governed, while at the same time it prohibits, under the severest penalties, whatever is productive of misery, such testimony is fairly receivable in settling the verdict as to whether God did or did not foreordain sin, and become responsible for all the misery that exists in the universe. It must be extremely difficult for any one who has paid even a slight attention to the glorious economy of the divine law, to arrive at any other conclusion than that its Author must be infinitely holy, wise, and good. Some, however, may still contend that this view of the subject cannot, even in the most remote degree, affect the "origin of evil" controversy, and that it may still be possible that God has stultified himself and his law, in order to bring about the greater good which moral evil is thought to introduce into the world. If, then, a pure and complete system of moral science could

throw some light upon this profound subject, so much the better. In any view of the case, it is quite inconceivable that it would tend further to mystify what is "already sufficiently darkened by all the powers of sophistry."

XVI. 1. The same reasons that have just been adduced to show that Ethical Philosophy ought to be kept separate and distinct from the controversy regarding the existence of moral evil, are equally applicable to CHRISTIANITY ; because the former is concerned with a breach of law, and the latter with the remedy to be applied for healing the disease. It is clear, therefore, that if moral truth, objectively considered, cannot in the slightest degree be affected by any treatment it may receive at the hands of the governed, it cannot be in anywise altered by the healing of the breach. The theory of absolute truth is, then, as independent of either the truthfulness of Christianity, or the reverse, as it is to any problem in Euclid. Truth was truth ere ever disaffection to the divine laws entered into the mind of man. It would have been equally the same had no such insubordination been manifested, and it will remain identically the same after all the rebellious have been brought to the bar of final judgment.

2. Christianity being of very recent introduc-

tion into the universe, it is clearly seen, even at first sight, that it could not, in any case, exercise a *retrospective* effect ; so that eternal truth could not be altered by any event that might take place in any world, or *at any period*,—if such a term can be used in speaking of things of this nature. Christianity, therefore, whether true or not true, cannot alter the eternal relationship of things, either subjectively or objectively ; and looking at it in this light, it is not difficult to conceive how both the heavens and earth should pass away sooner than that one jot or tittle of the divine law should fail. Although to the unaided eye of reason no scheme seemed within the range of possibility by which men could be assisted to know and to fulfil the law of nature, yet one has nevertheless been propounded having this end in view. But it would be entirely repugnant to reason to suppose that truth eternal could be lowered to suit the altered conditions of man, or that the laws of the universe should be suspended to meet the specialities of his case. The endeavour to substitute Christianity, or any of its rules, in room of the law of nature, is to attempt to accomplish what is in itself an impossibility, the effect of which cannot be otherwise than to bring discredit upon the scheme of redemption, and lower its high claims for credibility.

3. Although the fields of natural law and Christianity are clearly distinct, and marked out, as it were, by an impassable barrier, it does not follow therefrom that there is the smallest antagonism between the two,—only it is absolutely necessary to the understanding of either subject aright, that the exact relationship of the one to the other should be kept clearly in view. Moral truth must and will for ever be the same; but it does not follow from this that there is anything contradictory in a scheme having for its object the rendering of assistance to man, by which he would be enabled better to know the divine law, and better able to honour its commands. If we are to believe its Author, this was the distinct object of Christianity,—not to destroy the law of nature, but to fulfil it, and make it honourable.

4. Christianity is, however, entitled to notice in any search after moral truth, in this respect: that it is the only known religion *possible*; in other words, it is the only remedial scheme yet propounded that does not violate at the outset the first principles of moral truth, and therefore become repugnant to reason. In its very essence it recognises the inexorable demands of Divine justice, and in its whole economy admits that they must receive entire satisfaction. Further,

in its original conception it appears to have been above the faculties of man to have devised it—at least there is no approximation to such a scheme unfolded by any of the ancient philosophers previous to its introduction—from which the fair inference may be drawn, that it is Divine in its origin.

5. If Christianity be, in its main conception, *remedial*, it must proceed in the attainment of its end by an entirely different method than by the operation of the law of nature, the essence of which seems to say, *know all things*, and take nothing for granted; whereas, if we understand the matter aright, Christianity has for its cornerstone *faith*, or *belief*. It may be that the grand object of both is the same, namely, the securing of perfect happiness to mankind; but the roads they take to reach the goal are different, nay, even antipodal. The one proclaims that justice shall be meted out with an unsparing hand, while the other proceeds by dispensing some grace or undeserved favour.

6. To such as feel an interest in the spread of Christianity, and from the exercise of zeal in what they consider to be a good work, may be inclined to push it so far as to render the study of moral philosophy a dead letter, a few remarks

immediately connected with the subject in hand might be pardoned. Some affirm that the law written on the heart of man, although sufficient at first as a rule of duty, had become so silted up by ignorance, and corroded by rust, that a new promulgation of it was necessary. This would seem to imply that the original prescription of the law was imperfect; which, again, is as much as to say that the Lawgiver was imperfect too,—a conclusion they would not like to adopt. Man has been supplied with sufficient faculties for ascertaining his way of duty, and these faculties must be kept in constant exercise, else the machinery will speedily rust, and get into disrepair. It does not require a direct revelation from heaven to inform us that fire burns and water drowns; so neither should it be necessary for a revelation to inform us of the primary and essential conditions of our mental life. It should not require an angel to tell us that injustice, wickedness, and oppression among nations, are the causes of wars and bloodshed, or to prove satisfactorily “that an unjust life is not only more base and depraved, but in truth more unpleasant than a just and holy one.”*

* Plato,—“The Laws.”

7. Christianity is very frequently put forward as the basework of jurisprudence, or legislation; but, as will be shewn more fully below, it is natural theology that should be applied to this, rather than the scheme of grace. Perhaps that is really what is intended, although there is a confusion of the terms. But even supposing this to be the case, there is great necessity for distinguishing things that differ so widely in their modes of operation.

8. If we look at what persecutions and crimes have been perpetrated under the sacred name of Christianity, and the evil deeds that have been done for the spread of it, the conclusion can hardly be resisted that the very slightest admixture of *moral* truth would have at once prevented such atrocities. If such be the case in reference to churches and nations, the same remark will hold good in reference to the individual existence. In neglecting to impress upon the youthful mind the grand attributes of the Deity, overlooking the perfectness of obedience demanded by his law, and at the same time unduly dwelling upon his *love*, the mental growth may be impaired, and feebleness of the mental constitution engendered. Thus the noblest opportunities of strengthening the intellectual growth are missed, and the most

effective weapons of the armoury are allowed to rust and waste away. From the moral constitution of man, and the faculties which need constant supplies of nourishment, it is indispensable that he should receive adequate diets of substantial fare, else the noble plant will be of sickly frame, and liable to be blown down by every fitful breeze, or scourged by every breath of frost. Unless the field is thoroughly cleaned, and treated with fertilising manure, it cannot be expected to produce anything but weeds, although the right kind of seed may have been sown in it. The body requires a certain kind of food to promote healthy muscular development; and applying the illustration to the physiological aspect of modern Christianity, it may be doubted if it possesses that hardihood of constitution which a proper admixture of natural theology could, and is alone able, to supply. Reason, often so much vilified, is the noblest work of God, and there cannot be a doubt that Christianity is not intended to accomplish its degradation, but on the contrary, advance its enlightenment; and those who would decry natural law and reason, in order to increase the importance of Christianity, cannot be called its most enlightened propagators, although acting with sufficient zeal, and actuated by the purest

of motives. Their method of procedure may succeed in a few individual cases; but it is not well adapted to the breadth of man's intellectual and moral constitution. If it be the case (as will be more fully advanced afterwards) that all errors in the mind proceed from incorrect or dishonouring notions of God and his attributes, this will account for much of the sectarianism of the present day, and also for that unamiability of disposition that has often been the characteristic of many professors of Christianity. The more clearly man can ascertain the nature of the duties required of him, the readier, surely, will he be inclined to accept of the offers of assistance that may be held out to him, or take advantage of the sovereign REMEDY for all his woes. Harm alone can accrue from placing truth demonstrative, absolute, and unalterable, in opposition to what may be equally true in point of fact.

BOOK FIRST.

TRUTH OBJECTIVE.

I. The search after truth has been designated by numerous terms ; among others—" An enquiry into the nature of the chief good and evil." " Moral Philosophy." " What is the chief end of man ?" " Natural theology." " The moral law." " The intellectual system of the universe." " Criterion of virtue." " Moral science." " The whole duty of man." " The *summum bonum*." " The law of nature." " The nature of virtue." " Ethics or ethical science." These terms are applicable to man, considered simply as an individual ; but when he is spoken of in his capacity as a member of society—as a social being—the terms used for truth in this view are Political Philosophy, Social Science, Sociology, Political Economy, &c. &c.

II.—The objects of the present enquiry are—
GOD.
MAN.

In reference to the latter, the relationship in which he stands is of a twofold character:—To God and the duties thereby incurred—To mankind or society; or, stated differently—Given the existence of God and man, the creator and created, required the duties that are necessarily involved in the relationship in which they stand to each other?*

III.—In treating of man it is necessary to notice that he possesses a nature of two distinct substances, which are so interwoven together that they cannot be separated while he exists. 1, The *mental or spiritual life*, which part is regulated by the moral law, and takes precedence of the other or lower nature, as it has the power of governing it. A breach of the moral law by the mind would necessarily produce a mental distemper or disease, and at the same time relatively injure the physical nature. 2nd, The gross or

* To the duties man is bound to discharge to God and to society have to be added others of an inferior nature, such as kindness to the irrational creation.

animal part, which, again, is regulated by the physical laws, such as gravitation, health, heat, cold, hunger, &c. Viewed from this stand-point, man is on the same platform of existence with the brutes that perish. The full and complete knowledge of these laws would enable man to attain the full enjoyment of all his bodily faculties ; while any breach of them must necessarily produce minor evils, such as disease, inconvenience, discomfort, &c., which, again, react on the mind. Gross or continued violations of the physical laws naturally produce death. It is therefore necessary to attain a true knowledge of these laws, in order that their regulations may be given effect to. But,

IV. It is even of greater importance to attain a right view of the rules or conditions of man's moral or intellectual nature, as any violation of such laws or regulations must naturally produce distempers or diseases of the mind, and which, again, in a highly increased ratio, injuriously affect the body. So, then, it is the first and most important duty of every intelligent creature, to obtain and possess a complete knowledge of the nature of those rules, conditions, or laws, by which his spiritual existence is governed.

V. In order to arrive at such knowledge, it is necessary to enquire into the origin or beginning of the intelligence ; and it is evident that man must exist naturally or eternally, or else that his existence is derived from another.

VI. Man being, in point of fact, created and dependent upon another, or, in different words, his Creator, not only for life, but for all the necessities of his existence, it naturally and reasonably follows that,

VII. The Creator has a right of property, so to speak, in man ; He has also the right of prescribing rules for his guidance ; and, in fine, for accomplishing those objects for which he was called into life and prolonged existence.

VIII. It is demonstrable from this, that the Creator's will must be the rule, or condition of existence, not only of man, but of all created beings. Or, to state the matter differently, this is the foundation upon which all enquiries regarding truth must rest. Further, any other basework must of necessity be in its nature false and injurious. That the creature is necessarily dependent upon the Creator, whose will must be

the sole rule of life to him is a *first truth* which it is necessary fully to recognize, and moral philosophy can put forth any claim to be classed among the exact sciences.

IX. Any other conclusion than the foregoing—such, for instance, as that the creature was called into existence independently of God, with power to treat with his Creator on terms of equality, or in such a position that he could refuse to enter into negotiations with him—is plainly inconsistent with reason, as it would involve the natural contradiction, that God brought a being into existence whom he could neither control nor annihilate; or what is equally absurd, that God, in this important matter, acted without a motive, and was guided by chance, or fickleness.

X. Man being in his nature truly dependent on, and subject to, the will of his Creator, it follows, that any procedure, actions, or thoughts, opposed to the Creator's will or purpose, must render him liable to the charge of insubordination,—a state of abnormal life, necessitating a punitive visitation from the Creator, in order to bring back peace and harmony to his domains. Further, from man's position as a subject, it is evident that

there is no middle course which it is possible he can pursue,—he must either be in entire subjection to the Creator, or else at open enmity with him.

XI. God's will being the grand rule of duty to all created intelligences, and to man for his spiritual life, it is necessary to ascertain what is the will of God, and how it is to be interpreted and applied.

XII. As it would involve a contradiction to affirm that God could act contrary to his own inclinations, rules, principles, or characteristics, it is necessary to know what these are, in order to acquire a proper knowledge of the Divine Will, or, in other words, the rules, regulations, or laws, by which his creatures are governed.

XIII. The method of deducing the WILL of God from his ATTRIBUTES, is of all others the best and clearest, the most certain and universal, that the light of nature affords.*

XIV. God being the supreme creator, and his will, precepts, commands, or laws being the rule

* Dr. Samuel Clark.

of universal duty to all created intelligences. He must in himself be the FOUNTAIN of TRUTH: it may, therefore, be held as an axiom that IGNORANCE CONCERNING GOD'S CHARACTER IS THE ROOT OF ALL ERROR. Further, it is a corollary from this that the greater the ignorance of God,—the lower the notions entertained regarding him, so in exact proportion the lower must the religion and morality be, individual and political.

XV.—God being in his nature and perfections infinite, it follows from this that no created, and consequently finite, intelligence can fully know the Creator, or be able to describe his perfections. "*Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?*" With the limited faculties that man possesses, his knowledge must be contracted, yet it does not follow from this that he cannot know as much of the nature of Deity as may be sufficient for ascertaining the interpretation and application of his holy will, or be able therefrom to distinguish what is in accordance with, or contrary to, the principles of the divine government; in other words, to obtain the true theory of moral and political philosophy.

XVI.—Although there may be a wide field for the Deity to act in, without putting his attributes of justice or righteousness into operation, it does not follow that it is possible for him to act contrary to himself; or, what is the same thing, that the characteristics of the Divine mind can be opposed to each other. Thus, he may exemplify his goodness without trespassing on his justice. It may, therefore, be said to be demonstrably true, or a moral axiom, that GOD CANNOT ACT CONTRARY TO HIS OWN ATTRIBUTES OR LAWS. As a corollary to this, it may be safely laid down, that what is according to the will of God must be right, and whatever is contrary to the will of God must be wrong. Acting rightly must, therefore, at all times be pleasing to the Divine Being, and acting wrongly must at all times be in defiance of his authority.

XVII. The perfections, characteristics, principles; or, in fine, the attributes ascribed to the Deity, are of two kinds—

COMMUNICABLE.

INCOMMUNICABLE.

Of the former are his wisdom, knowledge, holiness, justice, goodness, truth.

Of the latter, his immutability, eternality, omnipresence.

In the very nature of things it is manifest that to describe a being as *created* and yet *eternal* must be contradictory, so it is evident that God could not create a being that had existence from eternity. Immutability includes the idea of self-existence, which is also opposed to the idea of a created being. God, a spirit, and infinite in his nature, can be present in all places ; but it is plain, that no being, especially a corporeal existence like the human, could be in more than one place at the same moment. A being possessing immutability would be a god, and yet nothing can be more absurd than the terms, a created god !

XVIII. The Divine perfections or attributes may appear to be distinct, yet they nevertheless run into each other,* and cannot be separated.

XIX. GOD IS ETERNAL.—There is no period, however remote, of which the imagination can conceive, when God had no existence ; neither is there any period in futurity to which we can point when God will cease to be. Ancient philosophers attributed this perfection to the Deity. They

* BROWN—On the existence of a Supreme Creator.

speak of the "Eternal Deity," and say, "The gods always existed, and never had a beginning." Plato's god of the *Timæus* was called "everlasting."

"Even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God."

XX. GOD IS IMMUTABLE.—The idea of falling away through weakness, being drawn aside by any temptation, being operated upon through fickleness, or attracted by something new, is inconsistent with the nature of a perfect being, such as a God is conceived to be. Were the Deity liable to change, there could be no regularity in the universe, and the whole of its affairs would get into confusion. Constancy pervades even the physical laws—Ignorance alone supposes the contrary; but as this notion dies out the truth will become better known. The fixedness of purpose everywhere observable, shews that the Creator of all is not given to change. Plato enters at great length into an argument to shew that God cannot alter himself, so that he could appear different to us at different times, "sometimes deceiving us, and making us conceive false opinions of him." That philosopher further affirms, that things in their proper form must necessarily be changed by themselves, or by

others. Now, as God and all that belongs to Divinity are in the best possible state, least of all should a change be effected there. Seneca says "That God is always constant to his own decrees, and never repents of his purposes, and that it is necessary he should be always pleased with the same things, who can be pleased with nothing but what is best."

"I am the Lord, I change not."

"Every good and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

XXI. GOD IS INFINITE IN ALL HIS PERFECTIONS.—In the Divine nature there is no deficiency, neither partial completeness. God is not holy or immutable to a given extent, but he is so without limit. Were the reverse to be the case, he would cease to be God. Further, God rules with no divided authority, or with toleration from another. He is God, and besides him there is no God. There is no room, even in Infinity, for two Gods. Who can put bounds to his authority, and say, "Hitherto thou mayst come, but no further?" Plato speaks of one Creator as the God and Father of all; while another

ancient philosopher says, "There is but one God, who made the heavens and the earth, and he was known to some by the term *Monas* or *Unity*." God's characteristics being necessarily infinite, it follows that either he is the best being in the universe, or else he is, on the contrary, the most wicked, cruel, or malevolent in the whole of infinity. With God there is no half-way: he is either good, without bounds to his goodness; or he is evil, without bounds to his wickedness.

"Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is the Lord."

"Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite."

XXII. GOD IS INFINITELY HOLY.—To suppose that God the supreme Creator, is capable of contracting defilement, impurity, corruption, and disease, inferring death, (not to speak of the bare mention of crime or sin,) is to lower him in the estimation of everyone, and lay the grand foundation of all mental obliquities. God in his nature is infinitely holy, ineffably pure. Evil cannot dwell in his sight. Nothing can possibly be more antagonistic to the Divine nature, than the idea of lust or passion, and of contracting filth or defilement. An unholy God is the greatest monstrosity it is possible to conceive of, or that

language could describe ; or, as it was well said formerly, this would be so monstrous an absurdity, that a man could not, though he should purposely study for it, dream "of anything more wild or extravagant."

"Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy."

"Holy! holy! holy! is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory."

XXIII. GOD IS OMNISCIENT.—To suppose that God only knows things partially, is the same as to say, that he is ignorant to a certain degree, and that he can only ascertain the truth by the classification of ascertained facts, or by observing the results of a series of experiments. According to the sublime Milton, "God's eye views all things at one view." "On His omniscience the boundless and unerring wisdom of the Deity is founded. It is established either as a deduction from his necessary existence, or by the displays of the perfection which his works unfold. The Divine omniscience must clearly discern both the *best ends* to be pursued, and the most effectual means of their attainment."

With God there is neither past nor future : all

is *present* to him, the beginning and end are both alike in his eye—one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. Should any crime therefore be laid to his charge, it could not be pleaded on his behalf that he did it through ignorance. It was, says Cicero, a great saying of Thales “God beholds all things.” Another of these philosophers (sometimes termed heathen) says, “Nothing is hid from God. He is intimate to our minds, and mingles himself with our very thoughts. For who can be free from the fear of Deity,—who foresees, regards, and takes notice of everything?” To the same effect, Seneca,—“What does it signify to make anything a secret to my neighbour, when to God (who is the searcher of our hearts) all our privacies are open?” Plato affirms that the gods know, and see, and hear all things; and that nothing of what there is a perception or knowledge can be hid from them.

“*O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me.*”

“*Thou knowest my downsit-ting and mine up-
rising, thou understandest my thoughts afar off.*”

“*Thou compasses my path and my lying down,
and art acquainted with all my ways.*”

"All things are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

"The Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts."

XXIV. GOD IS OMNIPOTENT.—This attribute of the Deity is one which is first taught, whether we look upon the individual, or upon the progress of nations. It is the first that is impressed upon the youthful mind, and many in countries not very civilised believe in this perfection of the Deity, even to the exclusion of all the others. It is contradictory and absurd to suppose that, although He is all powerful, He could do anything inconsistent with his other attributes, such as holiness, justice, &c. That God cannot be guilty of contradictions or absurdities, so far from lessening His majesty, can only add to it. In one and the lowest sense, any created being can do what is beyond even the power of the Almighty; he can be guilty of sin, which the Deity cannot. God then is all powerful, in what is according to the rectitude of his Divine nature.

To affirm that God is not omnipotent, would justly imply that there is some stronger power that could prevent God from putting his desires into effect, and that He would act otherwise if

He could. Mere knowledge without *power*, would be an idle speculation; wisdom to contrive without power to effect, would be but vain and useless.*

God then is all-powerful and almighty, without His power reaching to what is in itself a contradiction or absurdity; least of all could it be supposed that God is omnipotent to do what is wrong.

“I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, saith the Lord God, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.”

“He doeth according to his will in the army of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand from working, or say unto him, what doest thou?”

“And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying Hallelujah! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.”

XXV. GOD IS JUST AND RIGHTEOUS.—To affirm the contrary, would be setting up ourselves in judgment upon the whole existence of the Almighty. He being the supreme creator, the sovereign proprietor and ruler over all, His will

* Bishop Wilkins.

is of necessity just and righteous. To suppose that the Divine being could wantonly punish any of the created intelligences who had never given occasion of offence, is the same thing as to assert that God is in his nature cruel and malignant. On the other hand, to assert that He would allow the murderer to escape, would shew Him to be indifferent to the happiness or blessedness of the universe. God's justice forbids the thought that he would punish without offence, or add one straw more to the weight of punishment than the welfare of the whole imperatively demanded. God's omniscience enables him to find out what the turpitude of a given crime really is, and the amount of punishment it ought to receive. God is omnipotent, but the existence of this power without reference to infinite justice and righteousness, would be the exercise of *might*, independent of *right*.

If, on the one hand, God is just, and hence bound by His very nature to visit crime penally, on the other hand His justice will bestow the exact reward to which merit is entitled. Any of God's creatures acting in a perfectly just and righteous way, cannot fail to receive adequate return in the enjoyment of entire blessedness and perfect happiness.

“The Lord is just, he will do no iniquity. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?”

“The ways of the Lord are just and right, and the just shall walk in them.”

“A God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.”

“The Lord is righteous in all his ways.”

XXVI. GOD IS ALL-WISE.—The Divine creator having a sufficient object to attain, in calling into existence myriads of worlds, peopled no doubt with intelligences who sing his praise, and who share the blessedness of his nature, WISDOM was indispensable to provide means necessary to secure the end contemplated. God not only designed the greatest possible happiness of all his creatures, *but he at the same time designed the best possible means for directly attaining that object.* If we survey the stellar worlds and all things around us, we will be forced to exclaim, no fool hath made these ! God made nothing in vain ; everything he does is with the intention of contributing to his own glory and the welfare of his intelligent creation. To suppose that he could be building up with the one hand and pulling down with the other, or to affirm that he does anything in vain,—with wanton extravagance and

reckless waste, is as much as to say that he can be guilty of foolishness. God then is infinitely wise, taking all the best methods for attaining the grand design of his own beneficence. He cannot in any way act contrary to himself, or without an adequate aim—that aim being commensurate with the other perfections of his nature.

*“To the only wise God, . . . be glory for ever.
Amen.”*

XXVII. As has already been advanced, mere finity can never comprehend infinity, neither can language do justice to a subject that may well tax the faculties of loftier intelligences than human beings. Were we to spend a lifetime on the task, our efforts could not fail to exhibit the feebleness of our description. The Divine goodness, as manifested in creation, is enough of itself to form profitable subject of contemplation for our limited lives, and time would fail to tell of God's all-sufficient wisdom, and of the glories of His majesty, and of His boundless and illimitable existence. Let us turn where we may, we are sure to meet Him—no place is without Him, and He fills all His own work.*

* Seneca.

“ Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I make my bed in the invisible world, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.”

XXVIII. Attempts have at various times been made to shew “that antecedent to all law, and independent of a legislator, there are things, which of themselves, and by their own nature, are honest or dishonest.” This is what is called the essences or moral distinctions, and which are immutable or eternal. But as God is infinitely righteous, and likewise eternal, it seems impossible to separate the two questions. Reason is inadequate to throw any light upon a problem so profound, and as for *testimony*, there can be none. Nor could the solution of this problem in any way influence the nature of human obligation. That God is in his nature and perfections necessarily righteous, or, that he has chosen righteousness, and delights in it as the rule of his government, appear in reality to be much the same. Both views are equally honouring to the Divine Majesty, whichever

might be found to be the proper way of stating them. In either case TRUTH is the same in its grand unalterable distinctions, and Truth cannot be conceived of except in connection with its Divine Author and Interpreter.

XXIX. There can be no subject more important for man to investigate and humbly to adore than the infinite perfections of that God with whom we have to do. That he is a God of absolute holiness, loving righteousness, without variableness or least shadow of turning, is what is necessary to recognise ere we advance one step in seeking a knowledge of truth. His perfections are in very truth the Alpha and Omega of all moral and political science, and until the mind is made to realise their indispensable necessity, no further attempts need be made in rearing a superstructure where the basement is unstable and insecure. But surely the almighty power, the unerring wisdom, the spotless holiness, and the infinite goodness of the great Creator, are objects worthy of our most heartfelt adoration, and the most exalted contemplation of all intelligent creation! *

* Cicero, "De Natura Deorum."

BOOK SECOND.

TRUTH OBJECTIVE.—CONTINUED.

I. The survey that has been made of the nature of the Divine Creator—of his principles, characteristics, or attributes, will enable some idea to be formed of that method by which he governs the moral universe; or, in other words, how his will becomes the rule, criterion, or standard of truth, and the modes by which it is brought into practical operation. That God, the Supreme Creator, from whom all existence is derived, has a right to lay down rules, conditions, regulations, or frame such laws for the good government of his own world will not be controverted, as without such supervision, order and regularity could not be preserved. That the creator is a God of order and not of confusion, is abundantly obvious from all that can be

gathered from observations made in either the moral or physical creation.

II. God being the great creator of all, and in himself the only fountain of truth, and his holy and immutable will being the source of all obligation, it follows that his will becomes the LAW of all intelligent existences ; or, in other words, the method by which the Moral universe is governed and controlled.

III. The terms Divine Law, Law of Nature, or the Moral Law, all mean the same thing,—that is, the Will of God. What is contrary to the Divine will is forbidden by the Law ; and what is in accordance with it is enjoined by its authority. The will of God may be held to be the Divine purpose, while the Law, on the other hand, may be said to be its embodiment, and placed before us in the form of rules, regulations, or commands. According to some writers on Jurisprudence, Law is the Divine will reduced to rules ; or a code of regulations, expounded and applied to particulars,—while Tully says that “ Law comprehends in itself the whole energy of justice and equity.” “ Of Law,” says Hooker, “ no less can be said than that her seat is in the bosom of God, and her

voice the harmony of the universe. All things in Heaven and earth do her homage ; the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power. Both angels and men, and creatures of what creation soever, though each in different sort and manner, yet all with uniform consent, admiring her as the mother of their common peace and joy." The author first quoted, in one of his discussions, says that true law is not a treatise on the rights of common sewers and partition walls, " but its operation is to urge us to good actions and restrain us from evil ones : it is the highest reason implanted in nature—prescribing those things which ought to be done, and forbidding the contrary." " This, then, as it appears to me, has been the decision of the wisest philosophers, that law was neither a thing contrived by the genius of man, nor established by any decree of the people, but a certain eternal principle which governs the universe, wisely commanding what is right and prohibiting what is wrong. Therefore they called that aboriginal and *supreme law the mind of God*, enjoining or forbidding each separate thing in accordance with reason." " It is the reason and mind of a wise Being equally able to urge us to good and to deter us from evil."

“ Law is the just distinction betwixt right and wrong made conformable to that most ancient nature of all, the original and principal regulator of all things, by which the laws of men should be measured, whether they punish the guilty or protect the innocent.” According to Sir William Blackstone, “ Law, in its most general and comprehensive sense, signifies a rule of action. It is a science which distinguishes the criterions of right and wrong ; which teaches us to establish the one, and prevent, punish, and redress the other ; which employs in its theory the noblest faculties of the soul, and exerts in its practice the cardinal virtues of the heart. A science which is universal in its rise and extent, accommodated to each individual, yet comprehending the whole community.” Erskine, in his *Institute of the Law of Scotland*, says, “ that God necessarily wills what is just and good ; and that *Divine will which we are capable of discerning by natural light, truly constitutes a law to us.*”

IV. Human law or jurisprudence has been upheld as the grandest triumph of human genius, and all its expounders seem agreed as to its fundamental principles ; further, it would appear that it possesses certain inherent characteristics which belong to it naturally ; or, perhaps it would

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be more correct to say, that it divides itself naturally into certain component parts, without, however, interfering with the original nature of the thing itself. The study of that system of jurisprudence which is the result of the accumulated experience of many centuries, may afford valuable analogical aids for studying the nature and operation of the Divine law; but human laws can only reach actions, and in this respect the comparison fails, as the Divine Governor judges of the thoughts and intents of the heart—all being naked and open to his all-seeing eye.

V. Law is of two distinct kinds—Absolute and Positive. The former exists in the eternal fitness of things; it is the perfection of reason, and cannot be altered, rescinded, or dispensed with for any possible reason. Positive law, again, is instituted for the time being; it is only applicable to specified things, these being at all times indifferent, and involve no distinction between right and wrong. It may be altered or rescinded at any time, by the decree of the legislator. In no imaginable case can any positive enactment run counter to the spirit of absolute law.

Positive law may be described as an institu-

tion created to carry out into minor details the wishes of the legislator, generally to suit an emergency that may arise, and it is annulled or rendered inoperative when the cause for which it was originated dies away.

VI. The Divine law, as promulgated to all the moral intelligences of the universe, is divisible into two grand parts :—

THE LAW OBJECTIVE OR EXTERNAL.

THE LAW SUBJECTIVE OR INTERNAL.

As the law objective is the holy will of God existing as it were in heaven, and being a transcript of God's nature, it is consequently eternal in its duration, and immutable in its nature. It cannot possibly be acted upon by any change that may take place, in time or eternity ; and no one can reach the Divine tablet, to erase or deface its precepts. Were all created intelligences to rise up in rebellion against it, this law would remain the same as if all yielded a perfect obedience to its commands. No amount of merit or virtue on the part of the governed could secure exemption from the very slightest of its ordinances, nor by favour make it relax one iota of its terrible strictness, or give dispensation from its rigid

exactions. No possible contingency can arise where its suspension would be necessary ; nor could any opposition or defiance to its authority render it less stringent. So far as the objectivity of the Divine law is concerned, it would not avail a particle against it although all creation were banded together to secure its overthrow, because it is upheld and enforced by Omnipotence, whose arm could bring all the rebels low. At the same time, while it is able to punish the disobedient, it is able to reward the faithful ; but no crime, however heinous, could induce it to award a severity of sentence one hair's-breadth more than the demerit of the action imperatively demanded.

VII. In grand contradistinction to the law objective, truth *subjective*, or the law written on the heart, partakes of the mutability necessarily attached to everything created. It is liable to be corrupted by ignorance, and marred by crime. It may be altered by every wind of fashion, and by every change of opinion. The commission of every sin blunts its keen edge, and coats it over with rust and defilement. The law subjective, or the *conception* of truth by the mind being then liable to change, requires to be

constantly brought to be tested, and corrected by its immutable counterpart ; but as this falls to be treated more particularly afterwards, no further discussion of the law subjective is necessary here.

The Divine law being, in all respects, an emanation from God, the same observation is applicable to it that was made regarding the Divine attributes,—that although they appear to our view distinct, yet they all run into each other, and cannot be separated into distinct and independent characteristics.

VIII. THE DIVINE LAW IS INFINITELY HOLY.
—As God himself is in his nature ineffably holy, and the law being a transcript of the Divine essence, it follows that it too must be unutterably pure—holy beyond the power of any language to describe. Its *motto* (if the expression could be allowed) is—“ BE YE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.” The law, then, prohibits every impure thought, word, or action ; it forbids the least defilement ; and no two things could present a wider antagonism, than the immaculate holiness of God and his law, and sin. No illustration can convey the slightest idea of the gulph separating the infinite holiness of God’s law, from the fearful

nature of sin. The same difference is observable also in the *results* of the two principles: the holiness of God's Law infallibly produces blessedness, while on the other hand, sin as infallibly produces misery. There is not, perhaps, any one idea that could enter the mind of a depraved intelligence more gross or *more wicked* than to affirm or insinuate that the Divine Being could be guilty of crime, or that His immutably Holy law could be tampered with. Holiness being the habitation of God's throne, it is not difficult to conceive, as some of the ancient philosophers did, that the wicked and impure could not enter heaven. It has been well remarked that even were a defiled creature to obtain entrance to that holy place, it would be so intolerable to him that he could not remain within its sacred precincts.

The inexpressible holiness of God and of his law being, as it were, the chief corner stone in the building of truth, and *purity of reason* being the grand object of the Divine command, anything contrary thereto must necessarily lay the foundation of ERROR in any system of moral and political philosophy. Moral pollution, defilement of the reason, and the contraction of guilt, are what the holiness of the law prohibits under the

severest penalties, inflicted not only in this world, but in that which is to come.

*“The law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.”**

IX. GOD’S LAW IS PERFECT. —God himself being in his whole nature perfect, anything incomplete, deformed, or abject, cannot be in accordance with his nature, or pleasing in his sight. God’s law being absolute Perfection, it demands the perfection of reason, and cannot tolerate any service of an incomplete description. The absolute perfection of God and of his law necessarily prohibit any other standards of right or rules of duty, seeing that in their nature they must be incomplete and imperfect. An ancient philosopher beautifully remarks, that nothing could be added to virtue to make it more than virtue—nothing taken from it and the name of virtue left. Man, in searching after the ideal of truth, can only obtain it in the Perfection of the Divine law. What is wanting or deformed is contrary to the nature of beauty; but in the Divine, everything is harmonious, beauteous, and complete.

* The holiness of God and his law appear to be taught on every page of Scripture. The Mosaic dispensation specially taught this *central truth* by its symbolic rites and its ceremonial observances.

No human being may now be able to frame a rule of duty that can afford adequate directions for his walk through life ; but this ought to cause him to search the more after the Divine standard, and to be guided by its precepts.

“ The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.”

X. THE DIVINE LAW IS IMMUTABLE.—Human laws, at all times, necessarily partake of that imperfection which belongs to every thing human, and hence are capricious and changeable. What with them is right to-day, may be wrong to-morrow ; but God’s law can never be affected by any change of opinion, or by the breath of applause ; it remains for ever the same. It is a standard that cannot possibly be altered by any circumstance or event. The high lessons of duty and obligation deducible from it, are at all times and places the same ; eternity itself can never behold any change regarding it, or any falling away through weakness. Opinion, which may operate in moulding human institutions, instead of guiding or regulating this law, should, at all times and in all circumstances, be brought to its test and made conformable to its dictates.

XI. GOD'S LAW IS INFINITE AND OMNIPOTENT.

—When a subject differs from his sovereign, he may shift his abode, and take refuge in another territory ; but no one can fly beyond the pale of God's government. Human judges may pass sentences against insubordinate citizens, which the executive cannot put into force ; but no one can resist a law framed and administered by the Almighty ! Sentences of fugitation are often passed against evil doers who flee from justice ; but there can be no analogy drawn from this to the Divine law, as no one can escape to regions beyond the reach of Infinity.

XII. GOD'S LAW IS JUST AND RIGHTEOUS.—

God being in his own inherent perfection the essence of justice and righteousness, his law must necessarily enforce perfect rectitude of conduct, while it must condemn every thought, feeling or action of the contrary description. All God's intelligent creation being formed with a love of righteousness, and wickedness being entirely contrary to their better nature, it follows that in all circumstances it is necessary to inquire whether the thoughts of the heart are guided by a constant appeal to the Divine testimony. God's holy and immutable law, then, commands

that all the volitions of the mind should be in accordance with perfect rectitude, while, on the other hand, it forewarns all that adequate punishment, both immediate and postponed, must await those who act unjustly ; and as punishment is only awarded according to the demerit of the agent, no exception can be taken to the reasonableness of the sentence.

The justice of God's law cannot be, by any possibility, swayed to one side or other by any grace or favour, it being entirely freed from misapprehension, ignorance, or passion ; the administration of the Divine law punishes rather the crimes than those persons who commit them. "The Law is without passion, and strikes malefactors, as we do serpents and venomous creatures, for fear of greater mischief." If the law did not punish guilt, nothing can be clearer than it would be *unjust*, and worthy of universal condemnation, as its natural effect would be to promote disorder, confusion, and wickedness. Those, therefore, who can overlook the paramount claims of justice, even for the promotion of what they consider good objects, forget that such unworthy service must in the nature of things be productive of evil, and at the same time contrary to the spirit of the Divine law, as well

as displeasing to its Divine author. Those who set up a fancied expediency or utility, as the rule of their social life, and who suppose they can rear up a fabric of science without a close connection with God's law, and a constant reference to its demands, manifestly set up their philosophy in opposition to the righteousness of God. Neglecting to subject individual or social conduct to this test, must constitute a violation of its spirit. A noble tribute has been paid to the incalculable value of justice, by the illustrious Roman, so often referred to. "Justice is so necessary for carrying on certain pursuits, and its influence is so great, that even they who subsist by malpractices and villany could not subsist without some grains of it. . . If, therefore, the influence of justice is so great as to strengthen and enlarge the power of robbers, how great must we suppose it to be amidst the laws and administration of a well constituted government?"—OFFICES Book ii., c. 12.

XIII. GOD'S LAW IS PERFECT FREEDOM.—No sooner does a slave know that he has obtained liberty, and feel the iron fetters fall from off his limbs, than he knows he is under the regulation and protection of his country's laws.

Freedom is thus another word for Protection. The law has no terrors for those who respect its injunctions: it is only those who are conscious of having committed crime that dread its wrath, for they do not know at what moment the messengers of justice may lay hold upon them. A consciousness of having done right, and of having discharged all incumbent obligations, creates a peace of mind, and a serenity of disposition that nothing can equal, nor anything destroy. Man being created, and consequently under allegiance to his Creator, must always feel that he is under his Creator's law, and bound to yield it complete obedience,—thereby attaining the highest design of his existence;—in the words of Seneca, he ought to know that “TO OBEY GOD IS PERFECT LIBERTY.” According to Cicero, “that man will deservedly be called the only free man, who is neither subject to the domination of any one, nor subservient to his own passions. All wicked men are slaves, not slaves in the sense those bondsmen are, who are the properties of their masters by purchase, or by the law of any state; but if obedience to a disordered abject mind, destitute of self-control, be slavery, (and such it is,) who can deny that all the dishonest, all the covetous, in short, all

the wicked, are slaves?" Much to the same effect is what Plato relates regarding Sophocles, who had been much addicted to certain vices, and who, on being asked if he still indulged in them, replied, "most gladly, indeed, would I have escaped from these pleasures, as from a furious and savage master."

"Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness."

XIV. GOD'S LAW IS TRUE WISDOM.—The Divine law being a reflection of the Divine will, and of the universal nature of things, it must be manifest that its study must constitute *Wisdom*. A knowledge of the Divine law is truth, and in comparison with this knowledge, every other kind is dross. There is no kind of ignorance of so dark a nature as ignorance regarding the law of the Lord, and in the words of Plato it must be truly a *delirium of the soul*. To attain the correct theory of human life, and to obtain mental illumination to guide the mind in the decision of important questions, it is indispensable that the Divine law should be made "our study all the day."

God himself being infinitely wise, and having the blessedness of his Creation as his object in giving life, has so adapted the mental constitution to his law, that its study cannot fail to yield a true knowledge of all obligations necessary to secure complete happiness; the law of God, then, commands all to attain a knowledge of that in which true happiness consists and to adopt the only means possible for securing that end.

"The commandment is a lamp; and the law is light."

"The fear of the Lord is the perfection of wisdom, and the knowledge of holy things is understanding."

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path."

"Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding," &c.

XV. GOD'S LAW DEMANDS THE WORSHIP AND HOMAGE OF THE CREATURE.—Man being a created and, consequently, a dependent existence, it follows that he owes allegiance to some one, and in order to have this element in his condition kept prominently before him, it is necessary that he should yield outward acts of homage and wor-

ship. Nothing then can be more in unison with man's constitution than frequently acknowledging God as the supreme Creator, and recognising his law as the truth. The denial or non-recognition of the Divine will as the rule of duty amounts to an act of rebellion against the Most High. To worship any image, or to render the homage of the intellect to any created being, is to defraud God of that reverence to which he is entitled of right, and which it is the true interest of the creature to yield. Nothing can be more wicked or depraved in any being than assuming that place in the mind of his fellow-mortal which is due to God, as lord of the conscience. As he is the Sovereign Ruler in the universe, his law imperatively demands that all created intelligences shall not only devote a portion of their time to his worship, but also regulate their thoughts, principles, hopes, affections, and aspirations, by his holy law; and as he is omniscient and omnipotent, no slighting of his law or contempt of his authority can possibly pass unobserved, or fail to receive its due manifestation of the Divine displeasure. There are no circumstances in which a man can be placed, whether acting in his individual capacity or otherwise, where he can safely neglect to honour God by a constant reference to his authority.

“Whatever excels” says Tully, “has a right to veneration.” The Divine being having in himself all excellence and perfection is worthy of all the adoration and praise that the creature can offer. Should that void in the heart not be filled with the creator’s image, some other and less worthy object must usurp that place which is due to God, and to God alone.

The infinite beneficence of the adorable creator is worthy of the praises and adoration of all the creatures of his hand, while the Law being the perfection of reason, demands universal homage, and requires that the intellect be enlightened and perfected in true knowledge, so that it may be able to render the Divine command the willing obedience of a heart devoted to securing the grandest object of existence—a blessed and a holy life.

“It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High: to shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night!”

XVI. SPIRITUALITY OF THE DIVINE LAW.—

“Law, in the strict meaning of the word, is peculiar to intelligent beings, endued with consciousness and liberty of will; who, consequently,

have an inward power of acting or forbearing, and by disregarding the prescriptions of the law contract guilt, and render themselves obnoxious to punishment." The moral law, then, is directed only to the mind; as, although it may appear paradoxical, it is nevertheless true, that a moral being only can be guilty of crime. Sin has never been laid to the charge of any creature endowed only with *instinct*, which, although sufficient for the propagation and protection of the lower orders of nature, could never enable them to understand the nature of God, or teach them the difference between right and wrong. It is "the distinguishing property of man to search for and to follow after truth," and, says the same author, "it is the obliquities of the *mind* that are properly termed vices." According to Zenocrates, it is in the morality of the *thoughts* that virtue consists. That reasonable beings only can be held guilty of crimes, is adopted into the jurisprudence of all civilised countries; for where the defence of fatuity has been established, no punishment is inflicted. It is, then, the possession of mental powers that renders man a responsible being, because where no such faculties exist, to render the law understood, there can be no transgression. "No man," says Puffendorf,

“ can be condemned for violating a law which was above his capacity to comprehend.” To the same effect is the provision in our jurisprudence, that when a man kills another involuntarily, that is by accident, no guilt is imputed. “ The friends of Lucretia, when she was ravished, by turning all the guilt on the vile author of the crime, comforted her by stating that the mind only could sin, and not the body, and that there could be no fault where there was no deliberate intention or design.” The Divine law so far transcends human law, that the latter cannot afford suitable or adequate analogy in many respects. Thus, the human judge can only *infer* certain intentions from the evidence laid before him; but the Divine governor knows all things—he is acquainted with all the secret designs of the will—he is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart—he trieth the reins of the children of men, and all things are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

An ancient author describes Justice to be a constant and uniform *disposition of the mind* to give every one his due; while Tully affirms “ that crimes are not to be measured by the issue of events, but from the *bad intentions* of men.” “ For the guilty deed exists in the very hesita-

tion, *even although they shall not have carried it out.*" "*He that looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*"

As mind is the dominant power of man, or in the position of the charioteer to the chariot, it is apparent that virtue on the one hand, or vice on the other, can only exist there.

"The mind, in its own place, and in itself,
Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven."—*Milton.*

"*Above all keeping, keep thy heart ; for out of it are the issues of life.*"

"*For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murder, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies : these are the things that defile the man.*"

XVII. THE DIVINE LAW IS BENEFICENT.—

God being infinitely just himself, and his law being framed to carry out the beneficent purposes of his will, and to accomplish all the good possible, it follows that any action calculated to produce injury to any creature is contrary to the spirit of the Divine command. The Divine law, then, enjoins the promotion of universal benevolence—it commands all to desire and advance the general welfare. This does not interfere with

those duties that belong necessarily to the individual for his own interest ; but it ordains that he should leave no means untried for contributing to the general good, as he will derive corresponding advantage, on the other hand, from the benevolent efforts of others. The command to love one another is especially applicable to the human race, seeing it is cemented together by ties of the closest description. Those nations who transgress this command, and violate this essential condition in their existence, land themselves in wars and bloodshed.

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul, and strength and mind ; and thy neighbour as thyself.”

BOOK THIRD.

TRUTH SUBJECTIVE.

I. The Law Objective having been examined in the last two books, it is now necessary to investigate the phenomena of its counterpart—the Law Subjective. The former, as belonging to the nature of Deity, is essentially impeccable, but the latter, as possessing that mutability which belongs naturally to the *created*, is liable to change and decay. In calling intelligent beings into existence, God had no choice at all as to their mutability, for, in the nature of things, nothing created could be eternal or infallible. To suppose the contrary, is tantamount to affirming that God could make the four sides of a square unequal, and that, in fact, he could perpetrate contradictions or absurdities; or, in other words, act foolishly. If God could have endowed all his moral existences with impeccability, and did not do so,

he could not be called infinitely good ; but, on the contrary, partly good and partly malevolent. It is, however, perfectly absurd to suppose, even for a moment, that God could by any possibility endow creatures with his own INCOMMUNICABLE PERFECTIONS.

II. From the absolute perfection of the Objective, and the necessary mutability of the Subjective, it is demonstrable that any divergence from the right path, any introduction of error, or the commission of crime, must be traceable to the latter, and cannot in any degree affect the nature of the former ; or, in other words, God and his law must necessarily remain immutable, whatever vicissitudes befall the created.

III. It has already been affirmed that, for the good government of the world, certain rules, regulations, or laws, were indispensable ; from which it follows, that every separate existence must, so soon as brought into life, be placed under those conditions necessary to its own happiness, and also under the regulations for the protection of the whole of the governed. In order, therefore, to obtain any right ideas of the nature and operation of a given law, it is requisite to

look at it in the aggregate ; for observations confined to one case, and that, mayhap, exceptional, would necessarily produce erroneous conclusions. The law objective and subjective must be examined as a grand whole, and its character judged by its *natural effects*, when fully honoured, rather than by observations made where its authority has been contemned, where its breaches have not been vindicated, or the entire scheme completed.

“ The glory of God consists in manifesting his perfections, his power, his goodness, wisdom, and justice ; and these virtues are nothing else but the love of order, *and the good of the whole.*”

IV. TRUTH SUBJECTIVE ; OR THE PRESCRIPTION OF THE DIVINE LAW.—“ Law,” says Blackstone, “ is a rule *prescribed*,” and a higher authority declares that, “ where no law is there is no transgression,” and to the same effect “ sin is not imputed where there is no law.” “ A bare resolution confined in the breast of a legislator, without manifesting itself by some external sign, can never properly be a law.” According to Erskine, “ the thing prescribed as a law, must be in itself possible to be performed ; it must be so distinctly exhibited as to convey a precise

knowledge of its meaning to those who are to be bound by it; and it must be notified to them in such a way as they may know it to be the will of their sovereign."

In order to have the Divine law rendered binding upon his subjects, God had to prescribe it to them in a manner they were capable of understanding. This he did when he created them with faculties which enabled them to distinguish between virtue and vice, truth and error, or when, "*the law was written in their hearts.*" "Law is peculiar to intelligent beings endowed with consciousness and liberty of will, who, consequently, have an inward power of acting and forbearing, and by disregarding the prescriptions of the law, contract guilt, and render themselves obnoxious to punishment. In this restricted meaning God directs his laws either to pure spirits or to the human race."* "Those to whom nature has given reason, she has also given right reason, *and, therefore, also law*, which is nothing else than right reason, enjoining what is good and prohibiting what is evil."—*Cicero, De Legibus*. It is the Divine law, addressed, promulgated, published, or prescribed, that necessarily renders man, and all God's intelligent existences, amen-

* Erskine.

able to its authority, and accountable for all their actions. "That which renders beings capable of moral government, is their having a moral nature, and moral faculties of perception and action. Brute creatures are impressed and actuated by various instincts and propensions; so also are we. But additional to this, we have a capacity of reflecting upon actions, and making them an object of our thought."—*Bishop Butler*.

In certain respects the laws objective and subjective are the same. The author of the one is the author of the other; and when the subjective is pure, it is a complete reflection of the Divine. To have the internal law brought into complete harmony with the external is indispensable to the wellbeing of those governed by it. The higher the intellect is purified, the nearer a resemblance will it present to its Divine original; whereas the more it is marred by sin, the greater will be the contrast. The intellect, freed from ignorance and crime, and enlightened as to its conditions of existence, must present a resemblance, so far as it goes, of the creature formed after God's own image and likeness. The model for imitation is the Divine original, and the nearer the approximation, the nearer to real perfection will the creature be.

The Divine Light in the soul of man is a precious treasure, and the more it is prized and cared for, the greater will be its usefulness, not only to the possessor himself, but to society at large. "Men are," rightly considered, "a law unto themselves;" and it is necessary that this law should be kept at all times before the mind, in order that it may feel its responsibility for its stewardship, and that it may be constantly at hand for trying the "reins" of the heart. "Every man," says Seneca, "has a light set up within him for a guide;" and this light is neither more nor less than the natural understanding, or reason. All the different faculties of which the mind is composed are serviceable for applying the law—conscience, reflection, memory, perception, &c.,—each of which, properly exercised, will clearly shew man the will of his Creator. "God being the author of the nature of things, and of our constitution, if, in consequence of this nature and constitution, we are reasonably determined to judge after a certain manner, and to act according to our judgment, the Creator sufficiently manifests his intention, so that we can no longer be ignorant of his will. *The language, therefore, of reason is the language of God himself.*" "Man being a creature of God, formed with design and

wisdom, and endowed with sense and reason, the rule of human actions, or the true foundation of morality, is properly the will of the Supreme Being, *manifested and interpreted either by moral sense or by reason.*" "Nothing," continues Butler, "can be more evident than that, exclusive of revelation, man cannot be considered as a creature left by his Maker to act at random, and live at large up to the extent of his natural power, as passion, humour, wilfulness, happen to carry him,—which is the condition brute creatures are in ; but that, from his make, constitution, or nature, he is, in the strictest and most proper sense, a law to himself. He hath the rule of right within : what is wanting is only that he honestly attend to it."

V. PURE REASON IS A COMPLETE RULE OF DUTY.—God's law being in all respects perfect, it is of course complete in all its parts, which could not be the case if it were imperfectly prescribed ; and, as has already been noticed, any incompleteness in the law would necessarily prove imperfection in its author and administrator. It is evident, that were the rule of duty defective, the subject of it could not be held accountable for his misdeeds, as it would be an

unsafe guide—leading him often astray. Every intelligence, as it came from off the Divine anvil, was complete, having full power to understand the Divine will, and faithfully to render it obedience : more than this, God himself could not bestow, nor could a creature receive. Whether the subject chose to remain in this state or not, was a matter for his own consideration ; but, in any case, the Divine arrangements regarding him were complete, and in every respect sufficient for securing his entire blessedness. This could not have been the case were any part of the law insufficient, as a defective law could not be supposed to secure perfection of service.

The fact of a law being prescribed for the observance of the subject, shews that the governed had the power, if he had the will, of breaking the law, and putting it aside as a rule of life. Unless this were the case, the bare idea of a law would involve a palpable absurdity. Law can only be addressed, as has already been shewn, to intelligent existences, capable of rendering it due obedience ; or, on the other hand, of treating it with contempt. Unless they had this liberty of action, they could not by any possibility be held accountable, for their misdemeanors, or eligible for receiving rewards.

Rewards and punishments cannot be conceived of, in connection with a machine that operates simply as it is operated upon. God is not unjust, reaping where he has not sown ; and, therefore, if he had not given a full and complete revelation of his will in the soul of man, he would not exact a service which it was beyond human power to yield. But God's law is infinitely perfect, complete as a whole, and in its different parts—all being ordered by Him who cannot err, for promoting the blessedness of the created, and the glory of the adorable Creator.

VI. IGNORANCE OF LAW IS NO JUSTIFICATION OF CRIME.—There is not, in the whole range of jurisprudence, one rule clearer than the one enunciated ; and if such were not the case, it would hardly be possible to obtain a conviction against defaulters ; for they could, in all cases, plead that they did not know they were transgressing the law. Once a law is prescribed, it becomes a necessity with all subjects to become acquainted with its provisions, that is, if they wish to avoid the penalties attached to it. God having prescribed his law to all beings endued with reason, the necessity lies with them, not only to ascertain the nature of the law, but to

retain a correct knowledge of it, so that it may regulate all the affairs of life. "The study of the laws by which the Almighty governs the universe, is our bounden duty."—*Prince Albert*.

The promulgation of the law to every intelligent being is capable of illustration, by supposing that a machinist of reputation accepts of an order for a piece of delicate and intricate mechanism. After much thought and earnest devotion he completes his work, which is sufficient for accomplishing the purpose intended, and so long as it is kept free from accident, it performs its work admirably; but sometime after its delivery, it is carelessly thrown aside, and its machinery disarranged. The fabricator is applied to, and he states that he never contemplated his elaborate workmanship being used in such a manner, and further, he could not contrive or produce a machine that could perform its functions under such circumstances. The work was complete, and would have remained so; but if its owner chose to destroy it, no one could prevent him doing so.

VII. PRECEPT AND SANCTION OF THE LAW.—
"Laws," says Seneca, "are precepts mingled with threats; they command without suffering

expostulation." A law is divisible into two distinct parts : the declaratory, commanding such and such things to be done or prohibited ; and the vindicatory, which visits the breach of law with pains and penalties. The holy law of God ordains that all his creatures should obey it, and thus fulfil the highest purpose of their existence ; or, in other words, enjoy the greatest amount of blessedness that their natures are capable of. The sanction, again, visits the offence with adequate punishment, so that others may be deterred from following the same evil courses in all time coming. The sanctions attending the physical laws are often so clear, that even the lower orders of creation know them ; and were the mind sufficiently enlightened, the vindicatory part of the moral laws would be clearer still. The penalties involved by breaches of the moral and physical laws apparently follow in a sequential manner : the balance of nature in her operations seems so nicely adjusted, that from certain breaches of laws, a corresponding amount of punishment follows naturally. Poison absorbed into the system must necessarily produce certain inconveniences until it be expelled ; and what poison is to the body, sin is to the soul. It is therefore evident that every sin ever com-

mitted in the universe, must, of necessity involve a corresponding amount of punishment. Seed sown in this way cannot possibly decay in the germ, or fail to yield a due return at harvesting, any more than a virtuous action can fail to receive its merited reward.

A law, then, ordaining or prohibiting any things to be done or avoided, without corresponding penalties attached, would be a contradiction, —the command would only be an advice, suggestion, or expostulation. If, then, God governs the world by laws, moral and physical, it follows that certain penalties are unavoidably attached to them, in order to their being honoured and respected.

IX. CUSTODY OF THE LAW, SUBJECTIVE.—The divine law being perfectly prescribed, and suitable in all respects for accomplishing the high purposes of its author, it follows that whatever ignorance may prevail in regard to it, must be owing to its treatment at the hands of those who have been its custodiers. There can be nothing clearer than this, that mankind are responsible to God for the use they make of that divine principle in their breasts which, when appealed to, will point out the right, and warn

against the wrong way. But let its admonitions be unheeded, and its remonstrances stifled, and it will, for a time, become seared as with a hot iron. Every step taken in the downward direction renders it less valuable as a lamp unto the feet, and a light unto the path; while conversely, the frequency of its application, and vigour of its exercise, render it the more efficient. Every intelligent being has been furnished with a casquet for the safe keeping of this priceless jewel; but it depends upon himself whether he keep it in a state of perfection, or cast it away altogether. He has been furnished with a working plan of a great edifice, and it remains with himself whether to preserve it secure as a guide, or to have it mutilated, defaced, cast aside, or all but destroyed. In any circumstances, this abuse of the reason, its degradation and dethronement, cannot, as has been shown, be pleaded as any justification of crime. To search out the truth, to purchase it at any cost, and to sell it at no imaginable price, is the true wisdom of every intelligent and accountable being.

X. ON OBEDIENCE TO, AND TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW.—Without a law there could be no sin; and, without the possibility of sin, there

could be no law. It would be a plain absurdity for a governor to ordain things to be done that were impossible ; and, on the other hand, to forbid a sin that could not be committed. The very prescription of a law, then, shews that the subject was fully able to respect its injunctions ; while, at the same time, it was in his power to set its commands at defiance, and to live in a state of insubordination or revolt,—at all events, during the period of probation. Such a state of life could not, however, in the nature of things exist always, as the subject could not but feel that he rendered himself obnoxious to the punitive inflictions of the governor, whose sword was unsheathed and ready for his punishment. The knowledge or consciousness of guilt, would cause him to flee when no one pursued. A state of revolt is an abnormal one for any subject : it implies, in the case of man rebelling against God—a gross perversion of mind ; or, as Plato calls it, “a privation of intellect,”—“a disease of the soul ;” while on the contrary, “Virtue is a kind of health, beauty, and good habit of the soul.” “Shall corporeal defects,” he asks, “if they are remarkable, shock our sensibilities, and shall those of the soul make no impression on us ?” Whatever is perfect is beautiful, and receives

admiration, but what is deformed or corrupt, like the soul steeped in sin, is, in the eye of pure intellect, in itself loathsome and corrupt.

XI. VINDICATIONS OF THE DIVINE LAW.—It has been shown that a law is composed of two distinct parts,—precept and sanction. Without the latter, the former could not be a law in any sense of the term, but simply an advice, counsel, &c. The rewards for keeping the Divine command being uniform and sequential, so, on the other hand, are the penalties inflicted for its confirmation. Without reference to the doctrines of rewards and punishments, it would be absurd to conceive of the existence of a God, as nothing can be clearer to the natural understanding than, if there be a sovereign creator and ruler of the universe, he cannot fail to be pleased with those that serve him, and be displeased with those who would “confound the beauteous order of the world,” and introduce a reign of wickedness and crime. As has already been observed, the infinite perfection of the Divine law forbids the thought that wicked creatures, whose unblest feet have desecrated the earth,

“ Shall lie concealed from God’s avenging hand,
Or shun the search of his all-seeing eye !”

That a certain instalment of punishment follows wicked deeds in this world is apparent to the most illiterate and foolish ; but although the full measure of wrath is not inflicted here, it is in accordance with the clearest dictates of reason, that all the unrighteous must "yet suffer equal to their crimes." It may not be expedient that they should receive their whole punishment in one instant, who persist in evil courses all their lives long ; besides, there must be an opportunity allowed for the exercise of morality and virtue ; for, if the wicked should be immediately punished for every single offence, "the fear of their example would lessen even the merit of virtuous actions, *nevertheless, they shall not finally escape.*" Undoubtedly, great punishments follow sin in the present world, it being the sole origin of all woe, both as regards the sufferings of individuals as such, and in reference to nations ; but it is only at the balancing up of accounts that the SENTENCE can be pronounced against the unrighteous and impure.

" But know there is a judgment yet to come,
Which God, the Lord of all, shall execute,
Whose name tremendous is."

The dream of Erus, as related by Plato, in reference to the latter day of judgment, is a re-

markable one : " Reviving while stretched on the funeral pile, he related that, after his soul left his body, he came to a certain place, where he saw two openings in the heavens, amid which the judges sat, and they commanded the just to go to the right hand, and upwards through heaven, having fitted marks on the front of those who had been judged ; but the unjust they commanded to the left, and these, likewise, had behind them marks of all they had done."

Ancient poets and philosophers, especially the Stoics, believed that the punishments of the wicked were eternal in duration. Cicero affirms of those " who committed murder and similar crimes, a similar destiny hurls in Tartarus, *whence they will never come forth.*" Plato speaks of the wicked " suffering the most dreadful, most exquisite, and everlasting torments, as the punishment for past sins." To the same effect says the poet,

" Those who on earth were curses to the world,
Now lie in hell, o'erwhelmed in endless night,
And suffering from the hate of gods and men."

That the punishment due to sin inexpiated, especially in the case of such a monster as Nero, must be great, cannot reasonably be controverted ; but it would appear that the duration of the

torture must bear reference to the intensity of it, seeing that God, who is infinitely just, can neither add to nor deduct a pang from, what the necessity of the law peremptorily demands. Of this, however, there can be no doubt, that the unrighteous must abide the "infliction of Divine vengeance;" and it would be well for all to keep in constant view the advice of an ancient philosopher, "*We exhort and admonish all, to remember that THERE IS A GOD, WHO WILL INFALLIBLY PUNISH THE WICKED.*"

Human judges, in prosecuting a transgressor, will not inflict punishment unless the crime be attested by credible witnesses; and as, in some other respects, human courts fail in the analogy they afford of the Divine, so do they here; for in the court above, the judge not only knows all, but *the accused turns evidence against himself*. Like all the other faculties of the soul, sin often debases the conscience until it has been so silted up as to render its warnings unheeded; but it, nevertheless, acts as a spy, and on a moment's notice it can unfold, as it were, on a map unrolled, the whole events of a lifetime. "The observance of the law of nature is strongly enforced by that faculty of the mind called *Conscience*, by which we are not only informed of

what we ought to do, but enabled to turn our eyes inward upon ourselves, and after recollecting and examining our past actions by the test of reason, to pass judgment, whether approving or condemning. The terrors that take fast hold of wicked men upon a sense of their guilt clearly prove their knowledge, not only of the law itself, but of its being fenced with the heaviest penalties.”* Perhaps no one has described, in ancient or modern times, the sanction of the Divine law, better than that illustrious orator and patriotic statesman, to whom reference has already been so often made. “The pollutions of the body may be removed by a few ablutions of water, or in a few days; but the stings of the conscience cannot be obliterated by any lapse of time, and all the rivers of the world cannot wash them out. . . . The guilty must pay the penalty, and bear the punishment; not so much the punishments inflicted by courts of justice, as those of conscience; while the furies pursue and torment them, not with burning torches as the poets feign, but with remorse of conscience, and the tortures arising from guilt.” “Troubles and miseries oppress thee who thinkest thyself

* Erskine's Institute of the Law of Scotland.

happy and prosperous. Thy lusts torment thee, day and night thou art upon the rack : the consciousness of thy misdeeds tortures thee ; the terrors of the laws, and the dread of justice appal thee ; look where thou wilt, thy crimes, like so many furies, meet thee and suffer thee not to breathe."

XII. PERFECT OBEDIENCE TO THE DIVINE LAW: ITS REWARDS.—We now turn to a more pleasing subject than the last,—one, too, that has engaged the attention alike of saint and savage, in all times, and in all countries. Some of the immediate advantages attendant upon the keeping of God's commands are apparent at first sight ; but to describe the grand reward of a complete obedience to the precepts of the Divine law, is a theme fitter for the bright imagination and seraphic fire of the bard, than for the dry deductions of the philosopher. "Reason tells us," says a celebrated juris-consult, "that a wise being proposes to himself a reasonable end in every thing he does, and that he uses all the necessary means to obtain it ;" and, according to Bishop Butler, "it is manifest that nothing can be of consequence to mankind, or any creature, but happiness." Although virtue is to be loved

for her own inherent worth, yet that does not prevent us looking to the exceeding great *reward*, in perfect happiness, that follows right obedience to the Divine law.

Like the vindications of the law of God, its rewards are both immediate and postponed. In certain circumstances there may be real inconvenience, nay, even (what the Stoic philosophers thought a blessing) death, may result from a conscientious observance of its precepts, so that it is to the final state of accounting reference must be made, in order to obtain a fair view of the whole matter. Yet, even in the midst of great affliction, incurred for due obedience to God's law, there is an inward serenity of mind which the world can neither give, nor take away, and for the loss of which, nothing can at all compensate.

According to Seneca, a foretaste may be had by man of the joys of heaven, even "before being delivered from the prison of this flesh, if casting off the burden of sin, he keeps himself pure and unencumbered by the exercise of heavenly contemplation." "It is God alone," says Erskine, "who can only inflict the severest pains upon transgressors; but, also, from the inexhaustible treasures of his power and goodness, animate his creatures to obedience by the highest rewards.

That inward serenity of mind, on the reflection of having led a virtuous life, or, of having performed any act of disinterested justice, humanity, or self-denial, is the reward which God hath been pleased to bestow, even in this life, upon those who give a willing obedience to his law." God's law being perfect, and, as has been already stated, the least infringement of it producing a corresponding amount of evil, so, on the other hand, due obedience will secure its full compensation in blessedness of life. As there will not be one pang capriciously inflicted, more than the transgression of the law imperatively renders necessary, so the like uniformity of operation characterises the Divine rewards, which will not fail one iota from what they ought to be in every case. As the punishments awaiting the final sentence will doubtless be of a mental description, so the enjoyments of the blessed will likewise greatly consist in a condition of the mind. The lower pleasures or miseries of the body are but of comparatively little account, and they are shared in as much by the brutes of the field, as by man.

That pure spirits, "who have never contracted defilement, will enjoy the consummation of their bliss in the sweet fulness of God's love," is in accordance with the plainest reason ; and although

there may be different degrees of glory, yet "some there are who are enabled to make nearer approaches to God, while others, who partake not so plentifully of his nature, are somewhat troubled at his presence; but they all behold him in proportion to their strength, and are filled with the effluence of his glory. . . . Then shall the soul see beauty in its full perfection, even the Supreme Being himself; and being enlivened by his presence, she shall go on from strength to strength, till she be made one with him, and dwell in the full contemplation of his perfections, which is the ultimate end of all her wishes and desires."

According to Plato, the joys of heaven are beyond the power of "any tongue sufficiently to describe;" while Plotinus says "that there all things are carried on with exact harmony and order. Beauty is there in the abstract, and not as a quality inherent in the subject. All there are filled with the effluence of the Divine glory." The blessedness of heaven is described by others as the "soul being freed from all bodily encumbrances, and from the contagion of vice and wickedness, where it shall live and reign with the gods themselves, enjoying perfect tranquility, without danger of interruption, or fear of evil."

The pleasures of the blessed are spoken of as being "the most perfect fruit of wisdom and philosophy," and "they all become gods, as far as human nature is capable of." Seneca, speaking of the blessed man, affirms that

"He through long ages of increasing bliss,
Shall be translated to the realms above,
And sit on thrones judging the unrighteous world."

While it is stated of one who reached that delightful habitation, that he is now

"—— Soaring through the realms of light,
Himself a star amidst these glorious orbs."

Heaven has been said to be a place "full of intelligible light," so bright that, compared with it, any light in this world is but "a dismal gloom"; and those spirits who gain the high abode are all "crowned with snow-white wreaths." Great as its joys are, "they will never blunt the appetite or abate the admiration." "All will rest without weariness and be for ever engaged in the contemplation of God's ineffable beauties."

Clear as the notions of the ancient philosophers appear to have been regarding the punishment of the wicked, and the rewards of the righteous, there was one species of enjoyment of which they could form only a very crude idea—discoveries

in the lower or physical creation. Newton doubtless experienced felicity of the highest description when the laws of gravitation appeared clear in his view ; and yet the field of infinity cannot fail to supply innumerable manifestations of Divine wisdom and power, and manifold fields of discovery to call forth the worship and adoration of the sanctified spirit. What the great astronomer recognised as a fact may yet become known in its essence, when the mind enters the dwelling place of the blessed : the glorious machinery of the material universe may become known, and excite the astonished gaze, as when a boy gets explained to him the complex movements of a watch which he has beheld for the first time.

It has been remarked that the faculties perfected in this probationary state may retain their prominence in the world to come. A Haydn may perhaps experience, in a greatly increased degree, the wonderful effects of harmony, and a Milton may revel in the glorious fields of fancy. It is possible the botanist who has experienced such delight in the discovery of a rare flower or fern in the cleft of a crag, may pursue the same fields of enquiry, adding fresh stores to his knowledge ; while the geologist

may, in a greatly increased degree, realise the joy he felt on laying open, by a blow of his hammer, the nodule in which a hitherto unknown Ichthyolite has been encased for myriads of years, with every scale complete as on the day of its entombment. Others may delight in the harmony of colour, while, again, the mathematician may pursue his favourite avocation without weariness or fatigue. The nature of heaven has been described as of two different kinds—that of condition and place. It is not difficult to conceive that, so far as the mind and body are concerned, a great change must necessarily take place ere either could sustain the eternal weight of glory that awaits the blessed in the regions above, and where the minimum of enjoyment will far transcend the highest moments of bliss ever experienced by any being in this world. The sterility of our soil, the variableness of climate, and frequent recurrence of storms, point out this world, in its present condition, as unfit for the abode of a race of purely happy beings. Where “*the plains of heaven*” are situated, it is idle to enquire ; but this may be relied upon, that they will exceed in variety and beauty the fairest scene ever fancy pictured. Perhaps there is no form that beauty can assume that so universally charms mankind

as the varied loveliness of an enchanting landscape. Every one can gaze with admiration on a scene where lofty mountains close the background, here and there streaked with snow, and the valley filled with smiling fields, sloping gently downwards to a majestic river that waters the vale; the picture enlivened by cheerful homes, long the abode of valour, worth, and song, and framed on either side by hills and beetling crags clothed with noble pines, while the foaming cataract, ancient fanes, and structures of modern art diversify the foreground,—all being embosomed in foliage of every shade and of every dye; yet it requires no stretch of imagination to fancy that the purified intelligence in heaven can luxuriate in scenes incomparably fairer than this, or that ever artist portrayed or poet described.

It seems indispensable to the right education of the intellect, that the sanctions of the Law, and the rewards attending its fulfilment, should be kept steadily before the mind; for, unless this be the case, the momentary pleasures and gratifications of this world will bulk large in the eye, but which, compared with those that are infinitely loftier in their nature, and eternal in duration, are at best, as dross, and quite unworthy of that zeal with which they are so often pursued. The frequent

contemplation of such truths in philosophy is well calculated to lessen the hold this world has on the mind, and of raising it superior to those vexations and annoyances that afflict those whose hopes and aspirations are limited to the present fleeting scene. We ought to consider the attainment of its noblest prizes as little to be esteemed in comparison with the laying up of treasure in heaven, "where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." Life has been well compared to a battle, in which all must conquer or die ; to a race, in which the unfailing prize is a crown of glory ; to a seed time, where good grain is buried in the earth, to yield in the world to come the richest rewards. Here we can only see the glorious perfections of the Creator darkly, as through a glass ; but the purified intellect in heaven will find eternity too short for "beholding wondrous things out of His law ;" and the soul will experience a joy that passeth all understanding in the adoration of that Wisdom and Goodness which framed it, for communicating to others that blessedness which exists without measure in the Divine Original.

"For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath

the eye seen, O, God, beside thee, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him."

"To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them, the Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens."

BOOK FOURTH.

TRUTH SUBJECTIVE.—CONTINUED.

I. Besides the duties involved in the relationship existing between himself and his Creator, there are other obligations man has to discharge, arising out of that bond of union that exists between himself and his fellow-man,—or, in other words, his neighbour. These obligations are sometimes termed the second table of the law; and their application to the affairs of government, public opinion, policy, &c., constitute the science of Social Economy, Political Philosophy &c., &c.

II. The social relationship existing amongst mankind being framed by infinite wisdom for increasing the happiness of the whole, a *Law* was provided for regulating that relationship betwixt the subjects of it; for guiding them to the attainment of social well-being; and for being

rendered mutual blessings to each other. The law that ordained all men to act justly and righteously as individuals, could not fail to prohibit injustice and unrighteousness in affairs connected with the public weal. If, therefore, there be a law at all, that law must form a guide to man in his social duties ; and the knowledge of, and obedience to, that law, must constitute a true system of political philosophy : ignorance regarding it, or contempt of its authority, must lay the foundation of social wrong, and all those evils that are of a public nature. The total abnegation of this divine law, and the defiance of its authority, would speedily cast down any nation to the lowest depths of misery and wretchedness.

III. The law of nature, or in other words, the holy will of God, constitutes the standard of political virtue ; and it is immutable and beneficent, like its Divine author and upholder. It everywhere commands man to advance the welfare of his fellows, and prohibits him from doing anything that can directly or indirectly injure others. God's command is so " exceeding broad," that it cannot fail to be a lamp to the feet, and a light to the path in every emergency it is possible for a human

being to be placed in, and happiness or misery accrues simply according as it is honoured or contemned. The sanctions attending God's law, viewed from a political stand-point, are often so clear, that he who runneth may read. Nations forgetting to look into this royal law for the regulation of their national policy, land themselves into wars, bloodshed, famine, and pestilence; while all other breaches of it are visited according to the demerit of the offence. "That there is," says Bishop Butler, "a public end and interest of society, which each particular being is obliged to promote, is the sum of morals." Human society is compared to a body, all the members acting "as instruments of good to each other, and to the whole body." Again, "to aim at public or private good is so far from being inconsistent, that they mutually promote each other."

IV. God's law being perfect and sufficient when honoured, for working out the highest blessedness of all, whether as individuals or as members of the social system, it follows that all other systems of philosophy are erroneous and defective, and hence must be injurious to the best interests of mankind. Yet those who do not

make it a custom to apply the law of nature as a test of their conduct, social and political, must of necessity be guided by some other theory of virtue, or false standard of truth, *which they set up in opposition to the Divine!* It is from their being in harmony with it that all human laws, or in ecclesiastical language, civil magistrates derive their power to punish evildoers. "Human laws," says Erskine, "when they prescribe anything repugnant to natural justice, lose all their coercive force"; and to the same effect, "both the laws of nature and of nations derive their coercive force from reason alone." As morality is the grand foundation upon which society rests, and upon which all government is established, it follows therefrom, that such as are in authority are bound not only to give a practical example of their appreciation of it, by being guided by its precepts, but to promote its advancement by all legitimate means in their power, and at the same time, to use all proper measures for checking the progress of flagrant immorality, and of what is manifestly an open outrage to the majesty of the Divine law.

"The happiness of the world," says Butler, "is the concern of him who is the Lord and the Proprietor of it; nor do we know what we are about

when we endeavour to promote the good of mankind in any ways but those which he has directed." The grandest schemes, the most philanthropic efforts, and the most beautiful theories are of more than doubtful value, when they do not base their operations upon the Divine law; and for this plain reason, that they ignore man's responsibility to his creator, and virtually declare that his law is not the truth. The very first lesson in political science should be that man is accountable to God for all his actions, and that the Divine law is the perfection of all wisdom,—political as well as individual. The combined experience and accumulated statistics of "thrones, principedoms, powers, dominions," and even of social philosophers, can never rear up a structure of polity in any way useful to mankind, or beneficial to a nation, unless they start with the recognition of God as the sovereign ruler, "whom to obey is happiness entire," and in whose law "true liberty," "which always dwells with right reason,"* is only to be found. Man being in all things so dependent upon his Creator, it is indispensable to his welfare that he honour God by continually owning his obligations to him; and the contemplation of the infinite perfections of

* "Paradise Lost."

the Deity—especially of his beneficence—will lead him to do all the good in his power, and to promote, as much as he can, the welfare of society at large. Using the right means to benefit mankind will not only do service directly, but promote the cause of truth at the same time. There is great room for doubting that the means which are frequently used for benefiting humanity, partake too much of a curative nature, for the various appliances are made as if the diseases existed naturally, and did not spring from some letting out of water entirely within the reach of human aid. Human laws, institutions, or systems of philosophy not in accordance with the spirit of the Divine command, must, in the nature of things, be productive of much social distress ; and to seal up such fountains of human misery, is one of the noblest efforts a human being can engage in ; but many there are who pursue self-interest so keenly, that they seem to forget there are duties of a social nature which demand not only the exercise of philanthropy, but the use of the enlightened reason, in order that God's will may be enquired into, and obeyed. Ignorance of the Divine law cannot form any excuse for political error, “as the not knowing it is manifest ignorance and vice ; all other

seeming excellencies and wisdoms, when they are found in political governments, are abject ; but in arts sordid.*

V. The application that has been made of the divine law to the principles of legal jurisprudence, shews that the method of deducing individual and political duty from the will of God is no utopian scheme, nor a vain beating of the air ; but a subject demanding the earnest attention of all who would manifest a salutary regard for their own real happiness, and for that of mankind at large. As has been already advanced, God has placed within man a light to guide his footsteps ; but if he puts that light under a bushel, it cannot guide him aright in the path of duty, nor point out the way to universal happiness.


VI. It has been already affirmed, that when a man does not act up to the law of God, and embrace it as the rule of his life, individual or social, he must of necessity substitute some other standard in its place. It has been likewise already noticed, that the different theories of the standard of virtue propounded have been legion, all of which, so far as they are not in

* Plato.

accordance with the royal law, must be erroneous and mischievous. Among the many philosophical systems that obtain a place in the present day, the theory of Sympathy occupies a high one, both from the plausible appearance that it has naturally, and on account of the manner in which it has been systematized by a philosopher of high reputation. It is quite true that if all men were perfectly constituted, their sympathies could only be excited by what was right ; but, constituted as they now are, with erroneous notions of truth, human approbation cannot be a safe criterion for the testing of any action or thought. Sympathy is no sure or consistent test of conduct, because it varies with every age, and with every change of locality ; —what is approved of to-day may be condemned to-morrow ; and what is fully sympathized with on one side of the Atlantic, may be as heartily disapproved of on the other. This system of philosophy is defective in this respect, that it purports only to look at truth subjective ; while it ignores the objective altogether, as if God had no control over his own creation. It is his approval or disapproval that will render an action good or bad ; and without his being pleased, it matters little although every creature in the world approved of it. Exactly in the same man-

ner, it is of little consequence if every one condemned a man, provided only the monitor within approved, and that it was in accordance with the divine will. It must therefore be apparent, that the theory of Sympathy is an unsafe one to be guided by, as it will prevent the mind from seeking to be directed in its thoughts by the infallible standard of duty and obligation.

According to the system of Paley, "it is the utility of any moral rule alone which constitutes the obligation of it." This theory is, like the last, defective, as it overlooks the objective, and proceeds upon the hypothesis that if people are pleased with the immediate results of a given act, God cannot find fault. It, too, is like the last, changeable as the wind; and it would justify institutions in one country loudly condemned in another. In the course and constitution of things, all actions or institutions in accordance with the Divine command must be in the highest degree useful; while, on the other hand, all policy or political economy contrary to it must be productive of misery. If our actions be virtuous, their utility will follow, simply as a matter of course. The tendency of this theory of philosophy is injurious in this way,—it leads the mind to look at results as they appear at the time, with-



out reference to the ultimate effects, viewed in the light of time and eternity. This would teach us to pursue only such things as yielded immediate profit, to the exclusion of whatever required valuable sacrifices on behalf of country, friends, or of humanity at large.

In the philosophy or social science taught by the apostle of utility, it need not be wondered at that the now exploded "*laws of honour*," are placed in precedence of the law of the land, and of scripture, as one of the rules of right! Yet this law of honour "allows of fornication, adultery, drunkenness, prodigality, duelling, and of revenge in the extreme, and lays no stress on the virtues opposite to these." Much of the same description of philosophy is that enunciated as to promises, the obligations of which are held to depend entirely upon the expectations excited. No reference is made in these matters to the eternal distinction between right and wrong, either as it concerns man as an individual, or as a member of the human family. Political science founded upon such a foundation, could not be otherwise than insecure. "Whatever is good is certainly useful; therefore, whatever is virtuous is useful. Wherefore it is an error of bad men, who, when they grasp at something which seems

useful, separates it immediately from virtue : Hence spring stillettos, hence prisons, hence forgeries of wills, hence thefts, hence embezzlements, hence robberies and extortions from allies and fellow-citizens, hence intolerable oppressions, of excessive opulence, hence, in fine, even in free states, the lust of sway, than which nothing darker or fouler can be conceived."

The above remarks on the theories of Utility and Sympathy will apply to many other systems of philosophy, such as those of Expediency, Benevolence, Phrenology, Right by Contract, &c., all of which are proceeded with as if there were no God, and no universal standard of right and wrong. It is, however, fervently to be desired, that better days will soon dawn, when God's law will be honoured as the basis of all Ethical Philosophy ; when the inhabitants of the earth shall learn righteousness ; and when " the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the depths of the sea."

" Now, unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen."

“True law is right reason conformable to nature, universal, unchangeable, eternal, whose commands urge us to duty, and whose prohibitions restrain us from evil. Whether it enjoins or forbids, the good respect its injunctions, and the wicked treat them with indifference. This law cannot be contradicted by any other law, and is not liable to derogation or abrogation. Neither the senate nor the people can give us any dispensation for not obeying this universal law of justice. It needs no other expositor and interpreter than our own conscience. It is not one thing at Rome, and another at Athens; one thing to-day, another to-morrow; but in all times and nations this universal law must for ever reign eternal and imperishable. It is the sovereign master and emperor of all beings. God himself is its author, its promulgator, its enforcer; and he who does not obey it flies from himself, and does violence to the very nature of man; and by so doing, he will endure the severest penalties, even if he avoid the other evils which are usually accounted punishments.”—CICERO, *De Legibus*.

APPENDIX.

CONTAINING AN ADDRESS ON

THEISTIC AND ATHEISTIC PHILOSOPHY.

THEISTIC AND ATHEISTIC PHILOSOPHY:

A LECTURE.

HAD I solicited the advice of any judicious friend, I am sure he would have tried to dissuade me from subjecting any, and particularly a new system of Metaphysics, to the severe test of trying to get a popular audience interested in it. Perhaps no such experiment was ever attempted before, and I am not aware of any living Scotsman who has pretended to elaborate a new theory, and who could, therefore, appear at present in like circumstances. My intimate acquaintance, however, with the Scottish mind in all its phases, confirms me in the belief that my undertaking is by no means of so hopeless a description as many would be apt to suppose. I confess, at the same time, that I would have much preferred addressing an audience of former days,—for Scotland stands not now where it did—;and although more information is now circulated, there is much less real knowledge than there was in the days of Burns, or even among the class from which our Perthshire poet, Robert Nicoll, sprung. But although we have by no means the intellectual stamina of our forefathers, still, it is to be hoped the elements of religious principle and flinty thought are to be found in the land yet;—especially where the mind is uncontaminated and undebilitated by the current literature of the day. Sir William Hamilton, the greatest philosopher of modern days, was not a little *vogü* about the high position Scotland attained among the civilised nations in this respect; and he affirmed, that to be ignorant of Metaphysics argued something like a want of patriotism in a Scotchman. If I fail to render my new system understood—for there should be no problem in philosophy but which any of you could easily under-

stand—I must simply make more attempts,—the word *beaten* being unpleasant, especially to a Highlander.

MAN IS A THINKING ANIMAL.

Whether he is aware of it or not, man must *act* out some system of philosophy, be it good or bad : all the more need there is that it should be a right one. The human mind has well been compared to the ever-restless ocean : our thoughts are busy one moment surveying the contending hosts at Richmond ; and the next, discussing some tragedy in Glasgow. In an instant our imagination bounds to India ; and, annihilating space, deploras the Maori disturbances in New Zealand. Or, it may be, we are soaring aloft with Cicero, searching into the Nature of the Gods ; and then with Milton, listening to the diabolic councils of peers infernal ;—nay, we may be even trying to reach soundings in what many affirm to be a gulf still more profound,—the unfathomable abyss of Predestination absolute. A Greek philosopher quaintly observes, that if we must philosophize, then we philosophize ; if we must *not* philosophize, then we philosophize ; in any case, then, we philosophize. Even when sleep steals over the senses, and seals the eyes in slumber, the mind is busy still ; and the murderer awakes at his own alarms, for he hears the footsteps of justice in the moan of every wind, and in the *sough* of every blast. This ever busy bee is, then, continually thinking, deliberating, praising, blaming, scheming, every moment of our lives ; and surely it is not too much to spend *one short hour* for the express purpose of ascertaining whether these important processes are carried on in accordance with right reason, or in violation of all sound principle,—and of testing that compass by which we must steer our bark, in one way or other, across the ocean of time, to the haven of eternity ?

WHAT IS METAPHYSICS ?

Before asking your attention to that system of philosophy which I have recently demonstrated, I will endeavour to give you some idea of what Mental Science is, or at least ought to

be. Philosophy is, then, a love of Wisdom ; or, it may be described as a method by which truth can be ascertained and applied to all the concerns of life. "Wisdom," says Solomon, "is the principal thing ; therefore get wisdom ; and with all your gettings get understanding." Every man has a conscience within him,—or some ideas of right and wrong, however confused they may be. Now, it is the special province of philosophy, to have these ideas examined, and brought to the test of some immutable standard by which they can be compared and corrected, just as the citizens of Edinburgh test their time-keepers by the one o'clock gun. It professes to shew those elements that are indispensable to a successful life, and to tell us in what true happiness and real blessedness consist. According to some Greek and Roman moralists, it is a continual meditation on death. "How to live and how to die," says Seneca, "is the great lesson of every moment of our lives." According to Locke, "*philosophy is the proper business and science of mankind.*" It is a scientific inquiry into the chief end of man ; and it professes to explain the general rules by which alone that great object can be attained. Philosophy has, then, been truly denominated the *science of all the sciences* ; and beyond all contradiction, it is one of the most important subjects that can possibly engage the mind of man ; not only so, but before our species can make any progress in real and permanent civilisation, it is evident that it must become the every-day lesson of life. No one can dispense with its services ; that is, if he would lead a happy life, and be a blessing to his species. On the contrary, he should, like the sweet singer of Israel, make it, as he did, his "study all the day." One test of all philosophy is, that it should be not only *true*, but *good* and *useful* ; that is, capable of throwing a flood of light upon any, or every subject where duty or obligation are concerned ; or, in all affairs to which the terms right and wrong can be used, and where praise or blame can be made applicable. Trying my own system by this test, I will shew you by and by how it can assist the mind in arriving at right conclusions regarding such controversies as those concerning the Slave Trade, the Law of Hypothec, the Education Question, &c. &c. Farther, I am not aware of any

system hitherto promulgated of which the same could be affirmed. This leads me to observe that philosophy cannot be *defensive* in its nature. If it be not *offensive*,—aggressive, nay, if it is not somewhat quarrelsome, it is no philosophy at all. Had there been no ignorance or error in the world, there could have been no use for its operations; and its sublime mission will only cease when these shall be annihilated. The physical sciences, such as Geology, Astronomy, Botany, &c. &c., all endeavour to describe things *as they are*; but our divine science, although obliged to investigate the present condition of men with their institutions and laws, is not contented therewith, but is wholly taken up in ascertaining *how they ought to be*. A spurious philosophy, that could only contemplate man as he is, cannot prevail, without making sensible additions to human misery; and a true system cannot be disseminated without its being rendered actively beneficial to the human race, in every possible point of view. Pure philosophy is, then, simply another name for human happiness; and, unsound or atheistic philosophy, another name for human misery. The voice of nature within us, or of pure reason, is none other than the voice of God; and we have a high authority for saying that he who despises reason, or turns away from hearing its counsels, even his prayers are an abomination. When, however, any one refuses to listen to reason, and pursues vice industriously as his chief good, in that case, all philosophy is quite powerless. In such circumstances, as Plato says—and the observation is perhaps the loftiest height human genius has ever soared to—the interposition of a God alone could be of any avail. Metaphysics may teach man the perfection of service necessary to secure perfect happiness; it may shew the indispensable connection between sin and punishment; but let a crime once be committed, and it is utterly unable to shield the transgressor from the just consequences of his offence. Philosophy has only to do with the Law,—not with the Gospel; and unless the scheme of Redemption can save a man from the consequences of his sin, nothing in this or any other world can. There are some who entertain fears that the pursuit of philosophy may, in one way or other, be prejudicial to Christianity: if so, it should

not—on the contrary, the higher one's idea of accountability is, the more alive he should be to avail himself of that sovereign REMEDY, which divine beneficence has provided for the healing of all his mental disorders. There are some so ignorant as to affirm that Christianity has been introduced into the world to subvert those laws by which mind is governed—as if indeed that were possible to God himself—and they entirely overlook the authority of the Divine Author of Christianity himself, who affirmed that heaven and earth could easier pass away than that one jot or tittle of the law could fail. The Apostle says, that it is only by the commandment, or pure reason, that we can arrive at any knowledge of sin ; nay more, that the law of nature, or the Divine law, is a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ. Man has been provided with faculties sufficient to enable him to know right from wrong ; but when he boasts of his ignorance, and treats the enquiry after truth with contempt, as too dry for him to be troubled with, there is not much wonder that moral truth is so little esteemed, or its high lessons made light of. Man sears his conscience with a hot iron ; he wilfully and wantonly debases his reason : there is therefore no wonder that philosophy is at such a discount in the share market. There are other two great causes that have done much to hinder its healthful development, and to these I will now shortly allude. The first is :—

THE VAGARIES OF THE PHILOSOPHERS,

Or those ridiculous absurdities that have been taught as philosophy by the Metaphysicians themselves. There is no notion, however insane, that has not at one time or other been taught by those gentlemen called Metaphysicians, and dignified with the title of philosophy. For example, the founder of that “ fathomless ocean of German Metaphysics,” commenced his system by doubting his own existence ; and he proved it to his own satisfaction by the jingle, “ I think ; therefore, I am.” John Locke has a most learned dissertation on Identity ; and proves that one man is not another man ; and the same with animals, vegetables, and even stones ! But there is not a herd-laddie or

a hen wife in all the "kintra-side" that could not do this as satisfactorily as the learned author of "The Conduct of the Human Understanding." There was an ancient sage philosopher, named Pyrrhon, who flatly denied the existence of an outward or material world, so much so, that, if not prevented, he would have walked against a carriage or over a precipice; and, stranger still, a very learned gentleman, backed, too, by an Edinburgh Professor, read what is called "an able and ingenious paper," last month, before the Royal Society of Edinburgh, to show that there is no such thing as a material world—only a quantity of dynamics! If it were not actually sinful to waste the valuable time and talents a bountiful Creator has bestowed upon us, by combatting such insanities, we might speculate a little upon what kind of creatures we would be without bodies—without hills, rocks, land, or water! Were this system of philosophy to become general, even merchants would require to get new invoices printed; the grocer would require to say—Mr. So & So bought of J. S. Wyld, 5 lb. dynamics (best Congo), and the draper, "to 3 yards dynamics" (best calico). There was a saying, a few years ago—"The right man in the right place;" and if this paper were sent to the right place—to those gentry called in my younger days the *guidly neebors*, it might be found very able and ingenious by them, or even by Professor Pepper's Ghosts. The second obstruction to the progress of mental science has been the undue importance attached to

PHYSICAL SCIENCE.

When kept in its own place—that is, in due and humble subordination to Mental Philosophy, Material Science is highly useful to mankind; but when placed on a level, or in competition with Metaphysics, or even, as is frequently done, as subversive, then it becomes mischievous, degrading, despicable. Yet, only a few months ago, the Principal of one of our highest educational institutions in Scotland, publicly affirmed, that the history of civilisation is the history of the application of science and art to the *material wants of our species*. According to this set of it, Philosophy, Poetry—nay, even Christianity—could be

advantageously dispensed with, as so far from ministering to our merely sensual gratifications and appetites, their mission is to lift the mind from mere sensuality, and place man in a position somewhat elevated above the brutes of the field. Such pernicious notions may appear to some harmless; nevertheless, they are really atheism diluted—or, more properly, this is pantheism, one of its most insidious but not less soul-destroying forms. After reading such an unworthy and truly detestable sentiment, we surely need not wonder that a pure and enlightened philosophy is at such a low ebb in its ancient stronghold. Who could have believed, fifty, thirty, or even twenty years ago, that the mercury could, by this time, have gone down so far below zero in the Academic Halls of old Edina?

THE NEW SYSTEM OF PHILOSOPHY.

The great difficulty that has all along been felt in order to get morality placed before the world as a *science*, has been the want of a starting point—that is, one fundamental truth from which the rules, axioms, or maxims, necessary for scientific investigation could be supplied.* Or, in other words, some first truth from which all subordinate truths could be derived. Hundreds of theories have been propounded, and attempted to be demonstrated; but, as yet, no one has been found to stand the test of time. Suppose, for example, we agree that all things should be according to equity, or, what is right, the next difficulty will be to ascertain what is equity and what is not. Many have referred the criterion of the truth to the *will* of God; but, then, in trying to find out that will, they could arrive at no satisfactory basis upon which to found anything approaching demonstration. Many have tried to *divine* the will of God from the results of certain actions; but, as I will show you by and by, such systems are pernicious, and opposed to God's truth. I may remark here that there cannot be any system of truth in which

* Thus Professor Ferrier took as the basement of his system, that whatever an intelligence knows, it must have some cognisance of itself. It will be seen at a glance how immeasurably superior my starting point is to that of the St. Andrews Professor.

opinion has anything to do ; and, unless my reasonings are as indubitable as those of any mathematical train of reasoning, I will confess that my late publication has been a mistake ; for science has no symbols to represent public opinion. I may add here that I affirm the system I am now to bring under your notice is perfectly reconcileable with pure Christianity ; which, I think, cannot be predicated of any other ever propounded to the learned world. As I am sure no one present will dissent from me, I need not here go through the course of reasoning I have elsewhere adopted to prove that *God's law must be the truth*—or, in other words, the only possible or practicable system, or theory of mental philosophy. This law of nature, as it is often called, is the reflection of the divine attributes of righteousness, justice, holiness, goodness, and truth. My foundations are, I am certain, nothing new to you ; they are first or self-evident truths, and are totally incontrovertible in their nature. All that you want is simply to give them that importance which they demand, and which they will have, either by assent or by their sanction ; all that is necessary is, that you carry out your own principles to the only fair and legitimate conclusions to which they unmistakably point. It is by the law founded upon His attributes that God carries on the moral government of the universe ; and man is never more contemptible than when he sets up *his* notions of truth and of duty, ignoring,—if not in active hostility to, the divine system of philosophy.

THIS IS THE PLATONIC SYSTEM.

I have stated that this is a new theory of mental philosophy. It is new enough in this country ; but, in reality, it is very old. It dates as far back as the days of Socrates (who died B.C. 400), and his illustrious pupil, *Maximus Philosophorum*, as Plato has been called. It was the latter philosopher who sketched the first outlines, rough though they were, of the *Laws of Thought* ; and it was his grand idea that all truth was derivable from the *contemplation and imitation of the infinite perfections of the Divine Creator*. Higher than this it is doubtful if ever man, or even Seraph, can soar. A late distinguished Scotchman truly stated that all

philosophic truth is Plato rightly divined ; and all philosophic error is Plato misunderstood. Those filthy dreamers and obscene Theologians, the ancient Parsees, invented the blasphemous error that God foreordained sin, which no one now believes : How different this from the lofty notions of the philosophic Greek, who not only combated such wicked inventions, but affirmed that those who circulated them were guilty of great immorality, and deserved magisterial chastisement, as public nuisances to society!

THEISTIC PHILOSOPHY.

You will now, I trust, have some idea of what I mean by Theistic Philosophy. It is that method of ascertaining truth, obligation, or duty, by acknowledging God's law—the law of nature, or of equity, to be the standard or criterion of all our reasonings. In order, however, to let it be more easily understood, I shall adduce the following illustration :—Had you met a Boston slave-dealer, a few years ago, he would have justified that traffic by saying that God had signally blessed it to him, and to his family for generations ; that the wealth which had been so graciously bestowed upon one so unworthy, had been instrumental in the salvation of many souls ; that Providence had designed the cotton fields of Virginia for bringing the negro race to civilization and to Christianity ; that by such means multitudes of operatives had obtained employment ;—from all which the religious and philanthropic Bostonian would draw the conclusion that the slave trade was a divine institution. But, prythee, Mr Jonathan, is this trade in accordance with that law of equity which says, *Do as you would be done to* ? Would your family like their father and mother to be sold to enrich some avaricious speculator in human flesh and blood ? The *law* says, *Thou shalt not steal* ! It may be defied ; “the mutinous inhabitant within,” may be stifled for a time ; but one day he will assuredly speak out. Here, then, is an illustration of theistic philosophy—and the *very idea of trying the question by this test*, settles the dispute in a trice ! If opportunity allowed, I could, without trouble, show you how the divine law, *if only appealed to*, would prove at all times a lamp unto the feet, and a light unto the path.

The possibility of reducing morality to an exact science, as rigid as geometry, has been often denied. John Locke, however, insisted that it could, although he shrank from the arduous undertaking himself. I will now shew that it is not only possible, but highly practicable. You have all probably heard of the science of international law, and also of Vattel, one of its teachers. It is by this law all the negotiations of the Foreign Office are regulated. Now, this science is wholly based upon the will of God, or the Law of Nature, as applied to the transactions between nations, and as such, it is binding upon the consciences of all men ; and further, its dictates cannot be abrogated by kings or emperors, *as they are necessary and indispensable*. This law is so well branched out, as to shew what the will of God is in reference to every imaginable contingency, and in illustration of this remark, the privileges of ambassadors are defined ; not only so, but the protection due to their secretaries, families, retinues, and even their coaches ! My second illustration of Theistic Science is derived from our common law. Erskine's Institutes are held up as the authorized exposition of our civil law ; and that writer *deduces* the whole obligations from the holy will of God. These, on that account, become binding on the conscience ; and further, it is only from their being in accordance with the dictates of justice and equity that the power of punishment is derived. Erskine bases all notions of civil duty on the golden rule "that all men should act as mutual helps to each other, by doing to them what they might expect of us in like circumstances."

There is a third science that could be named, in illustration of my position, now in progress of formation—viz., that of Beauty. To such as feel an interest in this subject, I would recommend Professor Blackie's masterly Treatise on the Platonic Theory of the True, Beautiful, and Good ; and I am sure it will amply reward perusal.

ATHEISTIC PHILOSOPHY.

I will now call your attention to some of the characteristics of Atheistic Science,—that is, philosophy that either ignores

the Divine Law; or, what is the same thing, sets it at open defiance. All philosophy must necessarily be in its nature and tendency Theistic or Atheistic; there is no neutral territory, and he that is not on the side of truth must be against it. That does not prove, however, that the promulgator of Atheistical Philosophy must be an atheist himself; his sin may be one of ignorance. Thus, John Locke was a sincere Christian, but his theory of metaphysics laid the foundation of scepticism in England. It again produced Atheism in France, which culminated in that bloodiest page in the book of time—the dreadful Revolution of '89. All human ignorance, error, sin, and crime, are clearly traceable back to ignorance of God and His attributes; and all false systems of philosophy present an unmistakable family likeness. They concur in making Man, Man, Man, the measure of all things; they give worship and honour to the creature instead of to the Creator, who is God blessed for evermore!

The first example of Atheistic Science I will take from the Association for the Promotion of Social Science. Independently of the main objection to this Society, I cannot by any means understand why they should mention anything about *science*; for, I cannot find anything at all to justify the assumption in the records of the Edinburgh meeting, at which 3000 members attended. Many of the communications are, I am confident, as innocent of any such charge as they could well be. But with this I have not much to do. My object is to shew that these would-be-wise men endeavour (actuated, it may be, all the while, by the purest of motives) to rear up structures of human duty and of human amelioration, ignoring altogether the existence of God, as well as the existence of His Law, which is the only standard of excellence. I think the name of God is only once incidentally mentioned, and I do not recollect of any reference whatever, directly or indirectly, to the fundamental principles of all social duty. The whole structure is based upon the virtual repudiation or abnegation of the moral governor of a moral world, and so sets at defiance, and violates, the first principles of all truth. Tried, then, by the test above given, this Association is, so far as it goes, a bulwark of pure and unmitigated *Atheism*; and its influence, whatever that may be, must necessarily prove

injurious to society at large. In allusion to the great Social Science Association, we may, therefore, very safely exclaim,—

Down, down with all her battlements,
For they are not the Lord's.

PALEY'S THEORY OF UTILITY.

This system is usually associated with the name of Hume the Sceptic, and Archdeacon Paley. It is maintained in our day in a modified form, by John Stuart Mill, the Political Economist. Sometimes it is pretended that it is adopted as a means for ascertaining the will of God; and again, it is upheld on its own account, without any reference as to whether there is a God, and whether He has a will or not. In either way it is a pernicious system, for it measures truth by our own circumscribed notions of what is most useful at the time being, and keeps out of sight the ultimate effects of certain courses of conduct. It is one of the most prevalent of mental disorders, and the inquirer who would wish to see its fallaciousness, could not do better than dip into the pages of Cicero, the illustrious Roman statesman and patriot. If you were to adopt this theory as sound, you could not have any difficulty in justifying systematic Perjury, as well as the Slave Trade.

Every accountable being is in possession of faculties that enable him to know the nature of *causes* as well as effects, and if he does not give these faculties full scope and exercise, he must just stand the consequences. It should not really require any very deep thinking on your part to discern the fallaciousness of this system; for, an action that is in its own nature *wicked*, can never be found useful or desirable, either to ourselves, or to society at large. If Perjury be, as it no doubt is, antagonistic to the Holy Law of God, it would be no excuse for it in His eyes, that we expected to reap some pecuniary advantage from its commission. The following of actions because their tendency is supposed to be advantageous, does not proceed according to Theistic Science, and so must fall to be Atheistic. There is no mid way I know of.

EMPIRICISM.

You all have an idea of what doctors call quackery—that is, men pretending to cure diseases without troubling themselves either with the principles or practice of medicine as a science ; or rather virtually denying that there are, in reality, any such principles in existence. Empiricism is that system of philosophising in which all moral distinctions are repudiated, and although you may, for a short time, be dubious as to the truth of my statement, this type of intellectual distemper is more prevalent in Scotland than perhaps any other part of the world. “What !” you may ask, “are there people in Scotland who deny that there is any immutable difference between right and wrong? Impossible !” Now, I did not exactly affirm that there are ; but what I assert is, that our philosophy is largely adulterated with this deleterious compound. It prevails greatly in our educational institutions, and is easily discovered under various guises. Should you adopt the style of philosophising that I have advocated, you will not require to wait long before you meet with it ; and that, too, where you would not expect it to be found. Empirical philosophy “bottoms” (to use a Lockian term), on the proposition that God is not immutable ; and that He can make right to be right one day, and to be wrong the next. This is openly dishonouring to God, who says, “I change not.” “With Him there is no variableness, or least shadow of turning.”

The earliest disciples of this unclean system were the ancient Persians under Zoroaster, now represented by the Parsees of India. The Chaldeans likewise affirmed that it was possible for God to become the author of evil. You will not have much difficulty, even from your own cogitations, in seeing how derogatory this notion is to the perfections of God ; and you cannot find a leaf in Scripture that does not teach you that God is infinitely and immutably holy. And as for a law that could order all men to live holily and righteously the one day, and to act sinfully and wickedly the next, the idea is so preposterous, that it is passing strange how well-disposed men could have ever for a moment given serious attention to it. I need hardly say more

to show you that this form of philosophy is contrary to the letter and spirit of Scripture, and to the dictates of your own consciences. It is Atheism pure and undiluted.

I will not take up any more of your time by applying the rule I have laid down ; but those of you who may be desirous of following up this study, could apply it at your leisure, to such systems as that of the Epicureans ; to Adam Smith's theory of Sympathy, which you will find in his work "On the Moral Sentiments ;" to the system of Mandeville, "that buffoon and sophister of the ale-house," who taught that human actions spring from vanity, and that private vices are public benefits. In Political Economy, there is hardly one work that will bear the test of divine truth. I mean the writings of such authors as M'Culloch, Ricardo, John Stuart Mill, &c.

All are examples of human wisdom set up in daring opposition to the wisdom of the Eternal. They are truly Atheistic in their principles, nature, and tendency.

In concluding my lecture on Theistic and Atheistic Philosophy, I hope you will be able to join with me, (after contemplating these all-important matters to a never-dying soul,) in exclaiming, notwithstanding the teachings of philosophers, theologians and political economists,

Thy righteousness, O Lord, is an everlasting righteousness,
And Thy law is the truth !

